

U.S. sees better situation in Kuwait

WASHINGTON (R) — The United States, reacting to an Amnesty International report on widespread torture in Kuwait, said the human rights situation in the emirate had improved drastically in recent weeks. A State Department statement issued late on Thursday said: "The situation by most accounts in Kuwait is very much improved over what existed some weeks ago." Amnesty International said in a report issued on Thursday that hundreds of people had been arbitrarily arrested and scores tortured brutally or executed since the restoration of the Kuwaiti government in late February. "These violations are still continuing and appear to be largely unchecked," said the London-based human rights organisation (see page 2). The State Department said Kuwait's crown prince, Sheikh Saad Al Abdullah Al Sabah, had personally looked into many allegations of human rights abuses and had overseen many changes for the better. But the statement said Washington continued to discuss all reports of abuses with the Kuwaiti government and remained in close contact with the International Committee of the Red Cross which was monitoring the human rights situation in the emirate.

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Arafat sends Saddam message

NICOSIA (AP) — Palestine Liberation Organisation (PLO) Chairman Yasser Arafat sent Iraqi leader Saddam Hussein a holiday message saying Baghdad would overcome its current difficulties, the Iraqi News Agency (INA) reported Friday. Mr. Arafat, addressing President Saddam on behalf of the Palestinian people, the PLO and himself personally, said that "we hope by God's will and through the efforts of the Iraqi people that Iraq can face and overcome all its difficulties in order to rise up and go ahead on the road to prosperity," the agency reported. The telegram was sent to mark the 'Eid Al Fitr.

Bomb explodes at mosque in Baalbek

BAALBEK (AP) — A powerful bomb exploded in the mosque and office of a fundamentalist Sunni Muslim faction in this centre of the Bekaa Valley Friday. Police said one person was wounded. A police spokesman said the bomb went off shortly after midnight (2200 GMT Thursday) at the entrance to the ground floor mosque of the Al Abshah group in Baalbek's Rifai residential district. The spokesman said the powerful explosion inflicted "severe damage" on the mosque and the group's first-floor office and shattered glass in 15 nearby apartments. No group has claimed responsibility for the attack, the first against the tiny Sunni factions which is named after its founder-leader Sheikh Abdullah Al Habashi.

Bahraini envoy's daughter kidnapped

BOMBAY, India (R) — The five-year-old daughter of Bahrain's consul-general in Bombay has been kidnapped, police said Friday. They said Jaffer Ahmad Hubail's daughter Vedad was taken from her kindergarten school in Bombay Thursday morning by a middle-aged man who appeared to be an Arab. He showed school officials a forged note saying Mr. Hubail wanted to see her at the airport, he added. Mr. Hubail told police an anonymous telephone caller had demanded a ransom of 900,000 rupees (\$45,000). A few hours later, the envoy corrected this to 90,000 rupees (\$4,500). "Apparently, he is very dazed and does not quite remember," police officer S. Dhant said.

Muslim-American soldier jailed

HEIDELBERG, Germany (R) — A Muslim-American soldier who said it was against his religion to fight in the Gulf war, has been jailed for one year by a court-martial, the U.S. army said Friday. A spokesman at the army's European headquarters in Heidelberg said Private William Allen had been sentenced by a jury of nine officers after he pleaded guilty to desertion and missing a military movement. Allen, 25, a devout Muslim, had checked a copy of the Koran during the court-martial in Fierth, near Nuremberg. He had failed to report to his first armoured division unit one day before it was deployed from its base in Germany to the Gulf region. He was arrested by German police during a raid on a house in Passau where he was hiding.

British journalist missing in Iraq

LONDON (R) — The Foreign Office expressed concern Friday over the fate of a British journalist and two companions missing in northern Iraq since earlier this month. A spokesman said freelance film cameraman Nick Della Casa, his wife Lorraine and her brother Charles Maxwell were last seen by an American journalist on April 2 near Zakho, in the northern Kurdish area, heading for the oil city of Kirkuk. "They are unaccounted for and we are concerned about their fate," the spokesman said. "The families are concerned as Maxwell was due back in the U.K. three weeks ago."

Baker, Israeli leaders make little headway

TEL AVIV (Agencies) — U.S. Secretary of State James Baker failed Friday to bridge Arab and Israeli differences on a Middle East peace conference during a day of intensive talks with leaders of the Jewish state. Both Arab and U.S. officials said the discussions with Prime Minister Yitzhak Shamir and Foreign Minister David Levy had dealt with details of Middle East peace but more time was needed. "There are a number of outstanding issues that will have to be worked out and resolved if a process is to result," State Department spokeswoman Margaret Tutwiler said after the talks. In a written statement, Ms. Tutwiler said Mr. Baker "went over differences in Arab and Israeli positions on a number of issues and made suggestions as to how to bridge the gap in order to

get to a conference that would launch direct bilateral negotiations." "Understandably, the prime minister has asked for some time to consider these suggestions before getting back to the secretary," Ms. Tutwiler said. It was unclear when talks could resume, but Israel Radio reported Mr. Baker could be back in Israel by Tuesday and U.S. embassy officials were known to have made preparations for a return visit. Ms. Tutwiler said only that Israel would respond to the issues raised by Mr. Baker. "When and how of course will be determined by the Israeli government," she said. Mr. Baker, on his third Middle East tour since the Gulf war, leaves Israel Saturday for stops that will include Jordan, Egypt,

Saudi Arabia, Kuwait and Syria. Mr. Baker spent nearly two hours with Mr. Levy, 3½ with Mr. Shamir. Unlike the positive Israeli comments that marked Mr. Baker's two previous visits, Mr. Shamir's spokesman Avi Pazner was cautious. Mr. Pazner said Mr. Baker had raised ideas he collected in talks with Arab states and in Europe over the last 10 days. "These things require discussion, consideration and I believe it is too early to reach conclusions. It is impossible to reach conclusions now. We must speak more," Mr. Pazner said. "It was certainly an intensive and deep meeting that was conducted in the framework of the efforts to advance the peace process," he told Israel Radio.

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Israeli settlement challenged

OCCUPIED JERUSALEM (AP) — A Palestinian man petitioned Israel's supreme court on Friday to halt a new Jewish settlement in the occupied West Bank, saying it is being built on his land. The suit seeks a temporary injunction against the construction of Revana. It was set up by a half-dozen Jewish families, who moved into mobile homes in the middle of the night Monday. Creation of the settlement 45 kilometres northwest of occupied Jerusalem came just three days before U.S. Secretary of State James Baker returned to Israel for Middle East peace talks. Israeli peace activists said the timing was aimed at subverting the peace process. Mr. Baker has repeatedly said Jewish settlement activity hinders the possibility of land-for-peace compromise with the Palestinians.

The court challenge was not the only one aimed at the Revana settlers, who say they bought the 350 dunams of land for their settlement from a Palestinian. The Hebrew daily Haaretz said Friday that two other Palestinian challenges have been brought against Revana. The newspaper said residents of the nearby village of Deir Istiya complained to the Israeli military government that the road to the new settlement has been built on their land. It said a family named Sultan planned to petition the military government next week to prove that it, too, owned part of the site. The supreme court case was brought by the Society of St. Ives, a Jerusalem legal aid centre, on behalf of Kamal Darwish of the village of Kift Harith. The society sponsored last year's supreme court case that resulted in the court ordering the army to distribute gas masks to Palestinians during the Gulf war. The petition said that 50 dunams of the land belonged to Mr. Darwish and was properly registered. It calls for a halt to construction of sewer and water

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Baker's first visit to Jordan: Step on rough road to peace

Trip can produce results, depending on substance of Aqaba discussions

By Nermeen Murad
Jordan Times Staff Reporter

AMMAN — The quick return of U.S. Secretary of State James Baker to the Middle East, and the inclusion of Jordan as a stopover in his shuttle, are viewed here as additional positive steps that will contribute to the momentum U.S.-led peace efforts have lately picked up. But Jordanian officials and analysts caution against expecting too much from it since the "real problems" facing progress on the peace front in this region still lie ahead.

"The secretary of state's decision to return to the area so soon after his second trip only days ago and to include Jordan in his itinerary are bound to further

strengthen the peace effort, especially in view of other shifts that have been well received at this end," said one Jordanian official. "But until such time when the secretary of state is able to convince Israel to stop its settlement activity and agree to true Palestinian representation in the peace process and get talks going on the basis of resolutions 242 and 338, there will simply be no grounds for real optimism," the official added.

By his reference to "shifts" in the U.S. position, the official meant the new American inclination towards European participation in the proposed conference to tackle the Palestinian problem and the Arab-Israeli conflict and other reports that the Americans were dropping the word "region-

al" to describe the purely in favour of using the term "peace conference" for it. "The U.S. no longer insists on calling the proposed 'peace' conference a regional conference," said a senior Western diplomat. "It will be simply be known as 'peace conference' from now on," he said.

According to Jordanian observers, this step goes some way in assuaging Arab fears and suspicions about the concept of the regional party that the U.S. and Israel had agreed to during Mr. Baker's second visit to Israel on April.

A number of Arab leaders, including Palestine Liberation Organisation (PLO) Chairman

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Palestinians will be tough when they meet Baker

By Daoud Kuttub
Special to the Jordan Times

EAST JERUSALEM — When Secretary of State James Baker enters the home of the U.S. Council General in Jerusalem Philip Wilcox for his third meeting with Palestinians from the occupied territories he will find a different Palestinian delegation than those he met during his last two visits. The Palestinian group will be different in composition and composure.

While the delegation will still be headed by Faisal Hussein it will be smaller in size. In addition to Hussein it will include Bir Zeit University professor Hanan

Mikhail-Ashrawi and Zafar Nasser. The Palestinians will be more stern in their discussion and will press Mr. Baker for answers to many of the questions that have arisen since Mr. Baker's first visit to the area. They plan to spend much of the discussion talking about changes that are needed in the occupied territories for the peace process to continue.

Mr. Mikhail-Ashrawi says the key word will be "tangible results." Palestinians will want to know what the United States plans to do about the continuing Israeli settlement policy, and about the political and economic repressions in the occupied terri-

tories. They are also hoping to hear more about the legal basis of the self government scheme which Israel is proposing for the three year transitional period.

The expected tough Palestinian position reflects the growing anger among Palestinian activists about the way that Mr. Baker seems to have taken his ability to meet Palestinians in the occupied territories for granted. It also reflects the pessimism among people and leaders in the occupied territories and is meant to placate some of the opposition PLO groups who have been calling for an end to the Palestinian-Baker meetings.

Mr. Ashrawi, who also partici-

pated in the first Palestinian group that met with Mr. Baker, says that there is an attempt not to give the appearance of normalcy. "We don't want Mr. Baker to get the feeling that he can count on a meeting with us every time he comes without producing any results," Mr. Ashrawi felt that the rules of the game need to be clarified. "We can't continue participating in meetings in which the U.S. side repeats and often adopts the Israeli demands while we simply listen."

But Palestinians are careful not to give the impression that they want the talks to stop. Saef Erekat, who also participated in the

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Iraqis, keen to restore normality, fear loss of national sovereignty

The writer, a Jordan Times Staff Reporter, has just returned from Iraq

By Lamis Andoni

FOR THE Iraqi people, shattered by war, ostracisation and internal strife, the United Nations Security Council ceasefire plan sparked a glimmer of hope for restoring normality but only at the expense of what many Iraqis view as the country's loss of sovereignty and integrity.

"This is extremely humiliating and painful. We no longer have control of our destiny," said an Iraqi literary critic who preferred anonymity. For officials and ordinary people alike, acceptance of the ceasefire plan amounted to a political capitulation which has only rubbed salt into a sore wound inflicted by the military defeat.

"The worst part is that we do not know where the conces-

sions will stop, if they will," said a Baathist official.

Iraqis seemed particularly disturbed by the fact the ceasefire plan fell short of bringing about an end to the hostilities. The practical repercussions of this shortcoming — as viewed in Baghdad — is that the United Nations, but mostly the U.S., can exploit this implied uncertainty in keeping up the pressure on the government as one means of interfering in the internal affairs of the country. (Witness the latest developments in the north where foreign military presence is being imposed on Iraqis).

The U.S. and allies waste no time in reminding Iraq that they have the upper hand. Everywhere an American fighter breaks the sound barrier Iraqis feel that they are no longer

masters of their fate and constantly fear that the aerial bombardment can resume at any moment. A spontaneous reaction by an ordinary Iraqi is to shout in anger or at times some simply cry in frustration.

For ordinary Iraqis the prospects of any form of renewed military hostilities is simply unbearable. Decision-makers in Baghdad appear to be aware of the mood making the government more vulnerable to external pressure. "People have had enough. We cannot push them any further," said a government official, partly reflecting fears of another violent outburst of popular discontent.

The war and the destruction have dramatically reduced people's aspirations to mere survival. The elimination of mass destruction weapons and ballistic missiles does not constitute a major concern for ordinary Iraqis. However, Ira-

qi citizens interviewed by the Jordan Times did not conceal the shock of having to accept that their country had been transformed from a major and aspiring political and military power to a dependent, powerless country that has to accommodate the demands, if not even the whims, of its neighbours and others.

The ceasefire plan's provisions — concerning the limitation of Iraq's military power, access to technology and the drawing of Iraqi border — represent to many Iraqis the complete realisation of the Western goals which President Saddam Hussein had claimed he sought to thwart by challenging Western interests in the region.

"This is incredible. I thought we went to war and sacrificed our sons' lives to defend Iraq's

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Lebanon may take militiamen into army

BEIRUT (R) — Ministers looking for ways to disband Lebanon's militia are proposing that 20,000 militiamen join the army and other state bodies, security sources said on Friday. They said final proposals from a ministerial committee would be discussed by the cabinet ahead of an April 30 deadline for private armies to disarm before troops take control of all of Lebanon. The step would be in line with an internationally-backed peace plan, known as the Taif pact, to end 16 years of conflict. There are an estimated 40,000 militiamen in Lebanon but many are not full-time fighters. Diplomats see disarming the militia as the government's biggest hurdle before peace. The sources said the committee's draft proposals suggested that 10,000 Muslim and leftist militiamen and an equal number of Christian members of armed factions be employed by the state. The sources said they would receive a monthly salary of 100,000 Lebanese pounds (\$100) each from May 1, 1991 and would join the army, paramilitary police and other government agencies.

Aga Khan: Iraq relief plan needs urgent financing

GENEVA (Agencies) — A senior United Nations official said Friday that an agreement signed with Baghdad authorities to help Kurdish refugees return home would remain an "empty shell" if governments withhold urgently needed funds.

Prince Sadruddin Aga Khan, who is in charge of humanitarian efforts in the Gulf, said there would need to be "very serious consultations" before any U.N. involvement in the Kurdish refugee camps planned by the American military.

He told a press conference the U.N. did not have the resources to manage such a massive operation at short notice.

"We are not match for hundreds of (U.S.) helicopters and thousands of troops," he said.

He added that conflicting American and U.N. plans for the

refugees would likely be reconciled in the future. But he said he did not know when or how.

Prince Aga Khan and Iraqi Foreign Minister Ahmad Hussein Khaddayer Al Sammarai Thursday signed an agreement on joint relief efforts for Iraqis uprooted during and after the Gulf war. It provides for the establishment of U.N. relief centres to help refugees return home.

The accord, which is valid until the end of the year, stresses respect for Iraq's sovereignty and political independence.

The American plan for camps run by the U.S. military for Kurds near the Turkish border, by contrast, has been criticised by Iraq as interference in its internal affairs.

U.N. Secretary-General Javier Perez de Cuellar has said the positioning of foreign military

personnel in Iraq poses legal problems. He has said no U.N. peacekeeping troops will patrol the camps unless there is a Security Council resolution authorising the move.

Prince Aga Khan said he would discuss this with "discreet" U.S. and U.N. plans at a meeting with Mr. Perez de Cuellar on Friday.

He appealed to governments to divert more resources to enable the U.N. to implement its relief programme.

"I just hope and pray the U.N. will be given the means to carry out peacekeeping operations," he said.

"All this will remain an empty shell unless we get the money up front."

The U.N. has appealed for

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Allies, Iraqis meet in Zakho on refugee camps

SILQI, Turkey (Agencies) — The U.S. general in charge of setting up Kurdish refugee camps in northern Iraq met with Iraqi military leaders on Friday to ensure the safety of the multinational relief operation.

Lieutenant-General John M. Shalikashvili, formerly the deputy commander in chief of the U.S. army in Europe, met with the Iraqis in Zakho in northern Iraq for 15 minutes, said Lt.-Col. Philip Crowley, a U.S. military spokesman in Turkey.

"All we know is that the meeting did take place, it has concluded...and the participants are on their way back," said Gen. Crowley.

The meeting in Zakho, 13 kilometres inside Iraq, was the first by the allies in northern Iraq, where Baghdad put down a Kurdish rebellion. Over two million Kurds have fled for safety along the Turkish and Iranian borders.

The meeting was delayed several hours because the Iraqis, who are barred from flying military aircraft, were late arriving at the site. The allied delegation included American, British, French, Italian and Canadian officers.

Gen. Shalikashvili said the purpose of the meeting was "to as much as possible eliminate any possible clashes between coalition forces and Iraqi forces in this area." He spoke with reporters during a stopover at the U.S.

supply base near the Turkish border town of Silopi.

The general said it was not clear when allied troops would be able to start constructing refugee camps inside northern Iraq.

"Time is the biggest obstacle that I have. As you are aware...in an operation like this, when you have so many folks in dire straits, you just don't have the luxury to go into sequential planning and whatnot," he said.

The talks took place in a building near the Iraqi frontier post, in a green valley overlooked by rugged hillsides. Two American A-10 ground attack aircraft patrolled high overhead.

About 60 U.S. marines in full combat gear, their faces greased, guarded the Turkish side of the border. Explosions at the start of the Gulf war destroyed one border bridge. A second was damaged, but remains useable.

The talks began after a six-hour delay which Gen. Shalikashvili attributed to Iraqi transport problems arising from a U.S. ban on Iraqi aircraft flying north of the 36th parallel.

Gen. Shalikashvili took command Wednesday of an allied task force which could swell to 16,000 troops with a mission to set up new camps inside Iraq for half a million refugees.

"Our aim is to stop any possibility of inadvertent clashes between coalition forces and Iraqi forces," he said earlier.

Gorbachev in S. Korea

CHEJU ISLAND, South Korea (AP) — Mikhail Gorbachev became the first Soviet leader to visit South Korea when he arrived Friday on this tropical island for talks with President Roh Tae-woo.

About 5,000 students demonstrated in Seoul before his arrival, claiming that Mr. Gorbachev's visit will only anger communists. North Korea and hinder efforts to unify the Korean Peninsula.

Issues of peace and security on the Korean Peninsula topped the agenda for the talks, although no major agreements are expected.

South Korea is expected to ask the Soviets to cut off supplies of plutonium and other nuclear materials to North Korea until Pyongyang agrees to international inspections of its facilities.

The visit comes a week after South Korea's defence minister said that Seoul might launch a commando raid to destroy North Korean nuclear facilities. Seoul quickly distanced itself from the comment, which North Korea denounced, but the remark heightened tensions in this heavily militarised area of Asia.

Mr. Gorbachev's plane touched down in Cheju after a short flight from Japan. He emerged from the plane smiling and waving about five minutes later and was welcomed by Foreign Minister Lee Sang-Ok.

Mr. Gorbachev, on a whistle-stop tour of Japan's western coasts

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U.S. welcomes U.N.-Iraq accord; Aziz denounces American plan

From Serene Halasa
in Baghdad

THE WHITE HOUSE has welcomed an agreement between Iraq and the United Nations to establish centres for refugees in northern Iraq and said it does not view the plan as a rebuff to President George Bush.

The plan "appears to provide a basis for the U.N. to take over the operation we will establish" by sending in U.S. troops, presidential spokesman Martin Fitzwater said in Washington Friday.

Under agreement reached Thursday in Baghdad Iraq and the United Nations pledged to set up refugee relief stations.

"We envision our military presence to be very temporary until we can turn over the responsibility for our encampments to the appropriate U.N. agencies," Mr. Fitzwater was quoted as saying by the AP.

"Perez de Cuellar has indicated that, as I understand it, that he believes informal discussions will take care of whatever outstanding problems might exist," he added.

Iraqi Deputy Prime Minister Tareq Aziz has warned that the big power intervention in northern Iraq is "jeopardising" efforts to bring the situation to "normalcy."

U.S. officials said they were willing to cooperate with the United Nations.

"We sincerely believe that the government of Iraq with the cooperation of the U.N. could bring about the best solution to the current problem which will be, as we hope, a temporary one, if there is no foreign interference," Mr. Aziz said Wednesday.

"The intervention on the side of the big powers is not out of humanitarian reasons, they have their own political objectives," he added.

Mr. Aziz also said that his government was firm in its refusal of any infringement of Iraq's sovereignty and territorial integrity.

"They (the U.S. and its allies) have no right to intervene. They have no right to send troops into our territories. This is an intervention in our internal affairs," Mr. Aziz said.

"As far as the cooperation between us and the U.N., we hope to solve this problem on a humanitarian basis, on a legal basis, on the basis of security and comfort to the people who are suffering," he added.

Earlier on Wednesday, Iraqi Foreign Minister Ahmad Hussein denounced a White House statement that American troops will occasionally enter northern Iraq during relief operations extended to Kurdish refugees.

denounced the U.S. proposal to setting up American, British and French ground and air forces in the north.

"Such an attitude is a continuation of the policy of intervention in Iraq's internal affairs. Such an attitude is not necessary even in practical terms," he was quoted as saying.

Talks between Iraqi officials and Prince Sadruddin Aga Khan, the U.N. secretary General's envoy to the region, were already underway when reports came of the American proposal.

According to many observers here, the American bid was seen as another stumbling block in the way of finding a solution to the current problems in Iraq. Although the signing was postponed on Wednesday, the foreign minister and Prince Aga Khan signed the agreement Thursday morning.

The United Nations mission intends to set up humanitarian relief centres in Iraq to assist in humanitarian relief operations.

"We will respect the territorial integrity and stability of the host country," Mr. Eric Suy, the head of a fact-finding mission, said during a press conference held after the signing of the agreement.

Mr. Suy was dispatched by U.N. Secretary-General Javier Perez de Cuellar to report on the situation in Iraq.

Kurds continue to stream back into Erbil

By Serene Halasa in Erbil, Iraq

KURDISH REFUGEES have started streaming back to Erbil in northern Iraq, following ten days of tranquility and stability in the area, after Iraqi forces, loyal to President Saddam Hussein, recaptured the city from rebel hands.

The city, which faced civil unrest in a failed uprising organised by Kurdish insurgents, was retaken by the elite Republican Guards on March 31. During their voyage home sometime last week, some refugees said they had fled the area after being told by the rebels that their lives were at stake if they were caught by the advancing Iraqi army.

"We left because rebels told us planes were going to bomb us," Khaled Fakhri Hamad, a Kurdish refugee told the Jordan Times.

According to Mr. Hamad, the rebels had also blocked the

roads back to Iraq and prevented civilians wishing to go back from crossing. "Rebels have blocked the roads, and they won't let anyone come through," Mr. Hamad said, explaining that by doing this "the rebels would claim a political victory for their cause."

Erbil, 540 kilometres from Baghdad, was one of the places that witnessed the heaviest battles between rebel and government forces. It is also the main headquarters for the central government of Iraqi Kurdistan.

Kurdish residents who stayed on in Erbil during the 20-day unrest said rebels vandalised, looted, destroyed and burnt government and public properties, including schools, hospitals and even the local police station.

"People who have no respect for government and public property cannot claim they want to establish a rightful government," Ali Wali, a Kur-

dish jeweller and resident of Erbil said. Another resident, Nizar Azziz, a Kurdish teacher who was also present in Erbil during the unrest, said the rebellion contained foreign elements.

"Some of the rebels were bearded and spoke Farsi," Mr. Azziz said. "Not only did they destroy government and public properties, they also committed ugly crimes against the Kurdish residents of Erbil," he added.

Since the crackdown, government officials have already started to work on reconstructing after the unrest.

In a brief press conference with members of the foreign press present in Erbil, heads of the executive and legislative committees in Erbil, Jafar Abdul Kareem Al Barzachi and Bahaa Addio Ahmad, said that their committees had earlier convened to discuss ways of starting the reconstruction

phase. "The legislative and executive committees met this morning to discuss the situation and plans of reconstruction," Mr. Al Barzachi said.

The officials also said that up till now between 40,000 and 50,000 Kurdish refugees had returned, and more were expected to arrive.

Speaking on the Kurdish position in Iraq, the officials said that the Kurds who had fled were safe to return, especially after the government had extended the amnesty period to another week to allow their safe return home. Excluded from the amnesty, Mr. Ahmad said, were those who committed acts of rape, theft, and murder.

The officials also spoke of capturing prisoners of war during the unrest.

"With regard to the POWs, those who came from outside Iraq will be treated like regular POWs, but those who are from

inside Iraq will be sentenced individually, based on the nature of their crime, in accordance with Iraqi martial law," Mr. Ahmad added.

Red Crescent aid arrives

In another development, Jordan National Red Crescent Society (JNRCS) sources in Baghdad said last week that a large shipment of humanitarian relief supplies was heading to Basra, in the south, and Dahuk and Kirkuk, in the north.

The shipments include three electricity generators, large quantities of sugar, rice, medicine, milk, flour and water. "Two generators went to Karbala and the third to Saddam Hospital in Baghdad," a Red Crescent official, who preferred not to be named, told the Jordan Times. "This is the first time that the Jordanian Red Crescent has donated such large quantities of relief supplies to Iraq."

Water situation improving steadily in Iraqi capital

From Debbie Lovatt in Baghdad

SIX WEEKS After the Gulf war, Baghdad is no longer a city without electricity relying on the Tigris River for water. These two basic amenities have by no means remained their former capacities and supply is not constant, but each day is better than the day before.

Until one week ago women could be seen washing clothes on the banks of the river and the residents of the city were fetching river water for all purposes.

As electric power returned, water purification became possible and pumps functional again.

In the older parts of the city which are higher and, therefore, require more power to pump water to every house, the pressure is low and the supply often cuts to nothing from a weak trickle.

Talib Jalli, a 13-year-old who lives with his mother, sister-in-law and nine brothers and sisters in Al Karh area, had six five-litre containers loaded onto a trolley. It was his turn to go to the lowest street in the vicinity where there is always water in the pipes and fetch the precious liquid.

"Water only comes in a very weak trickle at night to our house," said Jalli, adding, "my family comes here every day to fetch drinking water. One week

ago we took water from the river."

Just round the corner from where the young boy was filling the containers, past the fountain which is now dry, are steps leading down to the river where women used to come to wash clothes.

Two young children playing on the shore explained that "one week ago women used to come here to wash clothes, now they don't because they have water in their homes and the river is dirty."

Ministry of Information employee Sabah Sami, acting as guide and interpreter, said "the river is dirty this month because of the rains in the north. It wasn't brown and muddy like this before."

A man and three boys with a bucket and shovel came to collect mud from the river bank.

One of the boys shouted: "We're getting mud to make a bread oven with."

At a small shop by the side of the road selling such sun-dried mud ovens Sabah Sami was able to offer more insight.

The ovens are about a metre high and fifty centimetres across. "A fire is made inside and when it is very hot the flattened dough rounds are placed on the inside of the oven to be cooked. The ovens make a lot of smoke so people use them on top of their houses. When kitchen gas is available,

modern steel ovens are used."

On the other side of the river in the Al Fadil area, three-year-old Qasim Qasim was helping his mother, Aliya Ja'far, fill steel bowls from a pipe in a street lower than her house.

"All day the water and electricity come and go. Today they were on for three hours very early in the morning and now it is nearly sunset. Some days it's on all day," said Aliya Ja'far, adding, "This water is for cleaning: my house, not for drinking. We collect drinking water when the tap's on at home. The water has been on for five days and it's clean so there's no need to boil it any more."

Aliya Ja'far lives with her husband, uncle and her ten children. The eldest is 18 and the youngest one-and-a-half. Her eight-year-old son carried one bowl back while she balanced the other on her head back to her house.

Sabah Sami estimates that it will take "six to seven months before electricity, water and fuel supplies are back to normal throughout the country."

Baghdad has been repaired quicker than other Iraqi cities. Basra in the south, for example, only has a few hours of electricity per day and residents still fetch water from the Euphrates River, trenches, puddles and even man-holes.

Iraq says it still has missiles, chemical weapons

UNITED NATIONS (R) — Iraq took the first step on Thursday towards complying with U.N. demands to destroy the missiles it fired against Israel and Saudi Arabia in the Gulf war and chemical weapons.

As required by a Security Council resolution adopted earlier this month, it sent a letter to the United Nations saying it still had ballistic missiles and chemical weapons, thus setting in motion a complicated clock that could see the destruction of these weapons in about two months.

Iraqi U.N. Ambassador Abdul Amir Al Anbari told Reuters he did not believe his country possessed any biological weapons.

Complying with another requirement, Iraq also told the

International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) in Vienna that it had no nuclear weapons and that its production and research plants for the peaceful uses of atomic power were bombed by the allies during the Gulf war, according to a letter obtained by Reuters.

Under the tough resolution adopted on April 3, Iraq was required to give the United Nations an inventory of its chemical and biological weapons and its ballistic missiles with a range over 150 kilometres by Thursday.

It was also required to inform the IAEA of its nuclear capacity.

Secretary General Javier Perez de Cuellar must submit a plan for their destruction or removal by May 18. After the plan is accepted by the Security Council,

the weapons must be destroyed within 45 days.

Mr. Anbari was unable to give details of the types and numbers of weapons and no copy of the list was made public.

Asked whether Iraq still had Scud missiles, the type used during the Gulf war to bombard Saudi Arabia and Israel, he replied: "I should think so. It says missiles."

He said Iraq also had chemical weapons — "chemical as well, yes." But he did not think it had any biological weapons, saying: "If I remember correctly, no, we don't."

The Iraqi envoy said the letter, in Arabic, criticised the ceasefire resolution for being "one-sided," because the problem of weapons

was a regional matter.

"However, it adds that since Iraq accepted the resolution ... we hereby provide all the information needed."

He added that Iraq welcomed inspection by the world body, "and they can go wherever they would like to go and check for themselves."

Iraq's letter to the IAEA, signed by Foreign Minister Ahmad Hussein, said Baghdad did not have any nuclear weapons and all nuclear-grade materials were already under IAEA safeguards.

These materials "could not be used — as far as we know — in nuclear weapons," Hussein said. But he said that "all industrial

and support facilities relating to the peaceful uses of atomic energy, as well as those devoted to research and development" were destroyed by bombs during the war.

In criticising the council for focusing on Iraq, Mr. Hussein said it ignored its own resolutions calling for Israel to place its nuclear facilities under international safeguards.

He said the council also did not "really deal" with Israel's attack in 1981 that destroyed a nuclear installation Iraq says was devoted to peaceful purposes.

The IAEA in a report last Nov. 27 said it had found no evidence that Iraq was diverting nuclear material to military use from its civilian research programme.

Few Indian workers returning to Kuwait

TRIVANDRUM, India (R) — Hardly any of the 172,000 Indians who worked in Kuwait before the Iraqi invasion last August have gone back, said a spokesman for a group representing Indians who fled the emirate.

"I know of only one person who has gone back," said the president of the Kuwait Returnees Association in the South Indian state of Kerala, which has taken in 60,000 of the returning Indian workers.

"People have mixed feelings about going back. We hear planes can only land for two hours a day because the oil fire smoke is so bad," the association's president, a heart surgeon who did not want to be named, said in an interview this week.

Indians formed the second largest group of foreign workers in pre-invasion Kuwait after the 400,000-strong Palestinian community, sending home badly-needed foreign exchange.

Kuwait has asked India to expedite the return of only 1,000 doctors, nurses and medical personnel as the country tries to rebuild its shattered health services.

About 7,000 Indians chose to remain in Kuwait throughout the occupation.

Kerala's chief minister, E.K. Nayanar, was optimistic that everybody would go back soon. "After two or three months none of the 60,000 will be left," he said.

An Air India spokesman said the airline, which has resumed many flights to Gulf destinations, has not restarted flights to Kuwait.

"I don't think in the next two months we will see very much in the way of special flights to Kuwait," the heart surgeon said.

About 70 per cent of the workers want to return to Kuwait,

"but most would like to go back now not with a family," the heart surgeon said. "We have absolutely no plans to reopen the six Indian schools."

India's ambivalence about the Iraqi invasion has cost it good will on both sides of the Gulf divide, diplomats said.

India's initially faint-hearted condemnation of the invasion angered Kuwait. Its decision to refuse U.S. military transport planes on their way to the Gulf did not win any points in Baghdad.

The heart surgeon said the foreign minister at the time, Indira Gandhi, told the Indian community during a visit to occupied Kuwait last September that it should respect Iraq's legacy there.

"This has hurt Indians in Kuwait," he said.

U.S. Senate panel proposes war tribunal

WASHINGTON (R) — The Foreign Relations Committee of the U.S. Senate unanimously approved a bill on Thursday calling for an international tribunal to prosecute Iraqi war criminals.

The bill said the United States should take the proposal to the United Nations Security Council or, if the council failed to act, work with the Gulf war allies to set up a tribunal.

The legislation, which was passed by a 16-0 vote and now goes to full Senate, required the president to order government departments to collect evidence of Iraqi war crimes.

It said there was evidence that Iraqi authorities had violated international law in its conduct of the war.

Gulf Arab states to meet in Iran on oil pollution

BAHRAIN (R) — An environmental organisation which includes Iraq and its Gulf war adversaries will meet in Tehran next week to discuss oil pollution, the Bahrain-based Gulf News Agency (GNA) said on Friday.

GNA said Bahrain's Health Minister Jawwad Salem Al Arrayed would go to Tehran for the April 22-25 conference of the Regional Organisation for Protection of the Marine Environment (ROPME).

The eight-member organisation had put oil pollution from the six-week war at the top of its agenda, the agency said. It was not clear from the report whether Iraq would attend.

Gulf environmental officials say between three and four million barrels of crude — far less than originally feared — spilled into the shallow waterway during the war.

The U.S.-led allies accused Iraq of deliberately releasing most of the oil; Baghdad blamed allied bombing raids on its tankers and oil terminals.

Gulf officials say around 3,000 barrels of oil a day is still leaking into the waterway from damaged Kuwaiti and Iraqi oil terminals and an Iraqi tanker sunk during the war.

ROPME, formed up in 1978, groups the six-nation Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) — Saudi Arabia, the United Arab Emirates, Kuwait, Oman, Qatar and Bahrain — with Iran and Iraq.

Oil pollution experts from the Gulf area oil companies mutual aid organisation, grouping firms on the Arabian side of the Gulf, will also meet in Dubai on April 23 to hear a report on oil spilled during the war.

Full U.N. deployment still weeks away in Kuwait

KUWAIT CITY (AP) — The head of the United Nations peacekeeping mission said Friday his forces would not be fully deployed to the Kuwait-Iraq border for weeks, and he could not say who would shelter the 50,000 refugees in the area.

The remarks by Austrian General Günther Greindl suggested U.S. forces may remain for several more weeks in a narrow strip of southern Iraq, where they have been running refugee camps for Iraqis fleeing civil unrest in the aftermath of the Gulf war.

Gen. Greindl said some U.N. military observers were scheduled to arrive Saturday to Kuwait City and would be sent soon to the U.N.-established buffer zone straddling the Kuwait-Iraq border.

"The moment we have military observers and vehicles available, we will establish an immediate presence in the demilitarised zone," Gen. Greindl told a news conference.

Asked when there would be a complete handover to the U.N. peacekeeping mission, the general said, "It will be not a matter of days, it will be a matter of weeks."

The U.S. military has withdrawn tens of thousands of soldiers from southern Iraq following a formal ceasefire agreement in the Gulf war. But about 18,000 from the 3rd armoured division remain in the Iraqi sector of the buffer zone, which stretches 10 kilometres inside Iraq and three kilometres into Kuwait.

Iraq has troops in the town of Um Qsar, which also is part of the demilitarised zone.

Both the U.S. and the Iraqi forces will have to leave the zone under the U.N. peacekeeping plan.

But U.S. army Colonel John Kalb, who is in charge of camp

for 11,000 refugees in the Iraqi border town of Safwan, said Wednesday the American military would not abandon the refugees until another organisation can provide assistance.

The U.S. army, along with Saudi Arabia and the Kuwaiti Red Crescent, are caring for around 50,000 refugees in or near the buffer zone. They are all eager for international aid organisations to assume responsibility for the displaced people.

Gen. Greindl said he was confident a solution would be found for the refugees, but declined to say what it might be.

The U.N. peacekeeping mission, formally known as the U.N. Iraq-Kuwait Observation Mission (UNIKOM), has no mandate to conduct humanitarian operations.

Officials from the U.N. High Commission for Refugees have made only brief visits to the refugee camps and have not announced any plans for relief operations.

Iraq and Kuwait will assume civil administration of their territory in the buffer zone, including police duties and border control. This has alarmed refugees, many of whom fought as rebels for Iraqi police will arrest them.

Geo. Greindl said he would be negotiating guidelines for Iraqi policemen when he travels to Baghdad this weekend. Gen. Greindl already has met with Kuwaiti and Iraqi government officials since arriving April 13, and described both sides as "very cooperative."

More than 30 nations are contributing personnel to the 1,440-man U.N. operation, including for the first time the five permanent members of the U.N. Security Council — Britain, France, China, the United States and the Soviet Union.

Saudis buy Patriots, Apaches

KUWAIT CITY (AP) — The Saudi commander of Islamic forces during the Gulf war said Thursday the kingdom has already bought high-tech Apache helicopters and the Patriot missiles hailed for knocking down Scud missiles — purchases of well over \$450 million.

Lt. Gen. Prince Khalid Ben Sultan gave no figures, but informed Saudi sources said the kingdom bought 40 Apaches. They would not give the number of Patriots.

The tank-hunting helicopters cost \$11.7 million apiece and the Patriots are estimated at least 1 million per missile.

The Patriots, manufactured by Raytheon, made their debut in the Gulf war. They won an accolade from President George Bush who said the Gulf war proved the critics of the radar-guided defensive "Scud-busters" missiles wrong.

Some critics still maintain that the missile is not effective in destroying warheads, only knocking them off their flight path, pointing to a warhead that tumbled into a dormitory housing U.S. servicemen, killing 27 and wounding 98.

Prince Khalid's announcement comes on the heels of a pledge by his uncle, King Fahd, to build a bigger and stronger Saudi army.

Saudi Arabia, already a leading arms client of the United States, Britain and France, is geared to spending fresh billions of dollars on new arms shopping.

But Saudi Arabia has had trouble in the past mustering enough educated troops to man all the sophisticated weapons it purchased.

Prince Khalid emphatically rejected any permanent bases for allied forces in the kingdom. But he did not exclude experts and training personnel remaining behind, and defence specialists have said the kingdom's shopping list would require thousands of personnel.

Prince Khalid, son of Defence Minister Prince Sultan, was on a tour of the Arab forces that are still stationed in Kuwait.

Amnesty appeals to emir of Kuwait to stop human abuses

LONDON (R) — Amnesty International said Thursday that human rights abuses, including torture and executions, had swept Kuwait since it was liberated from Iraq by allied forces in the Gulf war.

"Amnesty International today publicly appealed to the emir of Kuwait to intervene personally to end the wave of arbitrary arrests, torture and killings ... since the withdrawal of Iraqi forces," the London-based human rights group said in a report.

The report was compiled after a two-week fact-finding mission by an Amnesty team that went to Kuwait on March 28.

It said Kuwaiti armed forces and members of resistance groups had killed scores of people, brutally tortured many and arrested hundreds more arbitrarily since Feb. 26.

Most of the victims were Palestinians, among them Jordanian passport holders, it said. Iraqi and Sudanese nationals and members of the stateless Bedouin community were also targets.

"Victims have been gunned down in public or taken away, tortured and killed in secret," Amnesty said.

Amnesty said that many of the victims, arrested at home or grabbed in the street, had apparently disappeared.

It said it was concerned about 600 people held at a military prison outside Kuwait City in deplorable conditions.

"Torture is said to have been rife, including beatings, electrical shocks and prolonged deprivation, of food and water, and medical care virtually nonexistent," Amnesty said.

It quoted detainees as saying that at least seven inmates died in custody after torture. Amnesty had the names of two.

It said it had gained access to some of the prisoners. "The people we saw had clearly been through an extremely harrowing time and a few detainees still bore the scars of torture."

The team had individual details

on 10 executions but said the total number of such killings was much higher.

Some torture victims were reported to have suffered kidney failure resulting from severe beatings, the report said.

Amnesty said it had detailed testimonies of more than 40 people who said they had been tortured by armed civilian militias or the armed forces.

A 24-year-old Palestinian seen by the team a day after his arrest said uniformed men had beaten him for hours, stamped on his body, thrown acid on him and given him electric shocks.

"Severe injuries covered most of his back and shoulders. Parts of his thighs were raw, with skin peeling off consistent with the application of sulphuric acid, though some could also have been caused by electric current," the team reported.

Another victim, a Sudanese, still bore the scars of assaults inflicted in early March. "The appearances are of unusually heavy, multiple beatings of a severity not seen in my previous experience," Amnesty's forensic pathologist reported.

Amnesty said beatings with sticks, hose-pipes, rifle butts and electric cables appeared to be the norm.

The team catalogued more than 10 forms of torture, burning with acid, cutting with knives, biting and threats of execution and sexual assault. Teams of torturers often appeared to work in relays, maintaining the torture for hours.

"Although revenge for alleged collaboration appears to have been the motive in some cases, many people seem to have been targeted simply because of their nationality," it said.

Amnesty said the authorities had assured it they were trying to get the judicial system working again and that those responsible would be brought to justice.

JORDAN TELEVISION

Tel: 773111-19

CHURCHES

St. Mary of Nazareth Church Swellfish, Tel. 810740

Assembly of God Church, Tel. 637785

St. Joseph Church Tel. 624590

Church of the Annunciation Tel. 637440

De la Salle Church Tel. 661757

Terraviva Church Tel. 622366

Church of the Annunciation Tel. 623541

Anglican Church Tel. 625383, Tel. 625343

Armenian Catholic Church Tel. 771331

Armenian Orthodox Church Tel. 775261

St. Ephraim Church Tel. 771751

Assioma International Church Tel. 683326

Evangelical Lutheran Church Tel. 811295

The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints Tel. 815817, 654932

PRAYER TIMES

04:35 Fajr

05:57 (Shari'at) Dhuha

11:36 Dhuhur

16:12 'Asr

17:12 Maghrib

20:34 Isha

JORDAN TIMES DAILY GUIDE AND CALENDAR

The Church of Nazareth Tel. 675691

WEATHER

Bulletin supplied by the Department of Meteorology.

It will be relatively hot and dusty and some clouds will appear at different altitudes. Winds will be southeasterly moderate. In Aqaba, winds will be northerly moderate and sea calm.

Amman 12 / 30

Aqaba 18 / 34

Deserts 10 / 30

Jordan Valley 18 / 33

Yesterday's high temperatures: Amman 30, Aqaba 36. Humidity readings:

USEFUL TELEPHONE NUMBERS

AMMAN: Dr. Adnan Zaghloul 898140

Dr. Youssef Rashid 896301

Dr. Ahmad Al Dajani 676473

13 dead, 800 injured during Eid holiday

AMMAN (J.T.) — Government department and public institutions in Jordan reopen Saturday after a five-day Eid Al Fitr holiday marking the end of the holy month of Ramadan.

The past holiday was marked by reported deaths and injuries in road accidents, incidents of various types, fires and food poisoning cases.

Civil defence, public security and hospital sources reported the death of at least 13 people and the injury of more than 800 others in various parts of the country, with children making up for the largest part of the casualties.

The Civil Defence Department (CDD) alone reported that its teams were called to put out nine fires. It also reported 22 food poisoning cases which required civil defence men's help.

The majority of food poisoning cases were reported by Jordan's 12 hospitals, from Irbid to Aqaba.

Road accidents in the various governorates amounted to over a 100 and at least 6,000 people were reported to have received some kind of treatment or medicine.

al examination at hospitals and health centres in the country during the past week.

One of the major incidents during the past holiday was the murder of a 22-year-old man, identified by the police only as S.S.B., who was killed by his friend, identified as N.A.A.

Amman Police Department Director Brigadier Ghaleb Al Zoubi told Al Rai daily that the victim's body was found lying on the main street near the crossroad leading to Taj and Jofeh districts.

When the police arrived they found he had been stabbed to death by a switch knife. Brigadier Zoubi said that papers on the body revealed the man's identity. This, in turn, led the police to learn about his friend who was last seen with the murdered man.

He said that the police then moved to capture the murderer by searching for him first in Amman and then in Zarqa where he was captured and admitted to committing the crime.

According to Brigadier Zoubi, both the victim and the murderer had police records and the murder occurred following a quarrel between them.



Aqaba is hoping that its empty beaches will be filled up again (file photo)

Aqaba tries to lure back tourists scared off by crisis

By Rama Sabbagh
Reuters

AQABA — Jordan's Red Sea resort of Aqaba is trying hard to lure back foreign tourists scared off by the Kingdom's anti-Western rhetoric during the Gulf crisis.

The resort was turned into a ghost town by the crisis and beachfront hotels went for days without a single occupant.

Jordanian tourists are trickling back and officials here say Europeans will start returning to the Kingdom's most popular holiday destination when the main season starts in September.

Investors are going ahead with plans to expand the resort, which has some of the richest marine life and most spectacular coral reefs in the region.

"Two months ago, we were praying to see a human being in Aqaba. It became like a ghost city during the crisis," said Salim, a waiter at one of the hotels dotting the golden beaches edged by white houses and porphyry-brown mountains.

"Thank God locals are now returning and we are told the first charter flights from Finland will start in September," he added.

Jordan has the burden of repairing an international image tarnished by demonstrations of anti-Western feeling that flared during the Gulf crisis.

Hotel operators say the gov-

ernment has to move fast to erase the images on Western television of angry Jordanians vowing to kill foreigners to avenge the allied bombing of Iraq.

"Before the crisis, business was so good that we did not even need to market ourselves because Jordan was established on the world tourism map," said Sami Ansari, general manager of the Holiday International Hotel. "We are still there, but all we need now is some movement from the government to change the image of Jordan and reassure the world that the country is safe," he said.

One of the hardest challenges will be luring back Americans, the largest single group of visitors to Jordan before the war, though most stayed only 48 hours as part of Holy Land tours.

Many Americans stopped flying altogether during the crisis and there is still tension between Washington and Amman.

Bassam Qaqish, head of the Aqaba Region Authority, told Reuters the flow of visitors stopped completely in mid-August after Iraq's August 2 invasion of Kuwait. "Now local tourism is picking up fast and we hope it will be the same with the foreign guests."

He said the main tourist season, from mid-September to the end of April, was expected to reach pre-war levels. Between May and August few foreign

tourists visit Aqaba where summer temperatures can soar to more than 40 degrees centigrade.

Tourism accounts for 10 per cent of Jordan's gross national product and was heading for record levels before the Iraqi invasion.

Total visitor numbers from January to August reached 117,000, against 127,000 in all of 1989. Revenue rose to \$570 million in the same period, against \$475 million in all of 1989.

Scandinavians, mostly on week-long package trips, were among Jordan's biggest visitor groups before the crisis.

The first charter from Finland is due on September 21 and weekly Helsinki-Aqaba charters will continue until April.

Mr. Qaqish said that eight hotels to be completed by the end of the year would add 814 beds to the present 2,727 beds at 30 hotels.

He said Aqaba was developing the virgin southern beach, where three coral reef reserves have been set up, and was to build a village with 600 small chalets and three more hotels.

Mr. Qaqish said he was looking for investors to build an underwater marine observatory. There were plans to build a cable car between the mountain and the shore and a conference centre to host winter conventions from Europe.

Authority readies plan for water distribution in summer

AMMAN (J.T.) — The Water Authority in the Amman region is now putting the finishing touches to a comprehensive plan for the distribution of water during the coming summer season when consumption normally increases largely due to an increase in the use of water for domestic purposes and the presence of visitors from the Gulf states, according to the head of the Amman Water Department Sinan Khleifat Friday.

In a statement to the Jordan News Agency, Petra, Mr. Khleifat said that the present level of water consumption in the Amman Governorate for domestic and industrial uses amounted to 210,000 cubic metres daily, expected to rise to 230,000 cubic metres per day during the coming summer.

Mr. Khleifat said that his department hoped to provide the required amounts of water from its own resources, namely the underground resources within the Greater Amman region.

"The Water Authority in the Amman region is determined to ensure sufficient water supplies to all parts of the governorate, in a fair manner, now that it has overcome many of the negative aspects that emerged in the past summer and after replacing many parts of the old water network in a number of regions," Mr.

Khleifat said.

"Apart from replacing a 13-kilometre long old pipes network, the Water Department in the Amman region last year carried out repair and maintenance work on vast areas of the water network to ensure that no water leakage and loss occurs and to make available sufficient amounts for distribution," said Khleifat.

He said that his department was responsible for the supply of drinking water to 200,914 subscribers in the Amman region, and was also responsible for ensuring sanitation services represented in the sewerage network for 56,866 subscribers in the same region.

Referring to the 1990 operations, Mr. Khleifat said that his department last year pumped 75 million cubic metres of water to the subscribers in the Amman Governorate, of which 55 per cent were pumped from the artesian wells and underground resources within the same governorate and the rest was pumped from other governorates to the Amman area.

Mr. Khleifat said that the following water basins supply the Amman region with water during the summer season: Azraq, Duleil, Swaqa and Qatranah.

He said that in the winter limited amounts of water are pumped to Amman from the

King Abdullah canal in the Jordan Valley, but the water "is of course purified on the way, through the main purification station located at Zay, considered as one of the most modern purification stations in the whole Middle East."

During the winter, most of the water pumped to Amman comes from within the Amman Governorate, Mr. Khleifat said.

Referring to the sewerage system, Mr. Khleifat said that his department was not only responsible for connecting factories and households to the main system, but also monitoring the types of waste they produce and which is treated at the three treatment plants existing within the Amman region.

He said that in areas where no sewerage system has been laid yet, his department had made available a fleet of trucks which pump out the waste from the various cesspools and take it to the waste water treatment plants to prevent any pollution of the underground water resources on the one hand and pollution of the local areas within the Governorate of Amman on the other.

The Water Authority Department in Amman, he said, is responsible for the functioning of three treatment plants located at Abu Nuseir, Madaba and Khirbet Al Samra.

UNRWA study shows education system crippled in occupied territories

AMMAN (Petra) — The Education Department of the United Nations Relief and Works Agency (UNRWA) for the Near East has conducted a study on the situation of schools in the occupied Arab territories during the past six months.

The study showed that the occupied West Bank and Gaza Strip schools had lost half of their class days because of military closure orders or curfews.

It said that UNRWA's 98 schools in the West Bank lost in the period extending from September 1990 to March 1991 51.3 per cent out of 178 school days. UNRWA's 149 schools in Gaza Strip lost 48.2 per cent of 179 school days during the same period.

According to the study, a total of 13,691 school days were lost to UNRWA's schools in the Gaza Strip while 8,405 were lost in the West Bank UNRWA schools.

The study said that 73.4 per cent of the lost school days in both the West Bank and Gaza Strip were caused by military closure orders issued by the

Israeli occupation authorities, 13.3 per cent were caused by general strikes — 13.3 per cent in the West Bank and 14.3 in Gaza Strip — and the rest were caused by curfews imposed by the occupation authorities or by sit-ins staged by school students and teachers at schools to mourn colleagues killed by the Israelis.

On April 4, 1991, the occupation authorities ordered the closure of UNRWA's preparatory school for boys in Al Nusirat camp in Gaza Strip, until further notice, because of demonstrations which took place in the surrounding area. Teachers at the school affirmed that their students did not take part in any demonstration and did not even leave their classes at that time.

On April 9, 1991, a military communiqué was issued ordering the closure of UNRWA's schools in the Tulikarem refugee camp in the West Bank, for the rest of the school year. On April 6, the authorities ordered the closure of UNRWA's elementary and preparatory schools in the city of Jenin.

Algerian doctor heads for Iraq to inspect health services

AMMAN (Petra) — President of the Algerian Medical Federation Jamal Wild Abbas, who is also chairman of the Arab Emergency Health Committee (AEHC), left Amman for Baghdad Friday on a several-day visit to Iraq.

Dr. Abbas will inspect during his visit Algerian and Arab medical teams working in Iraq and will familiarise himself with the services they provide to the Iraqi people.

Dr. Abbas is scheduled to meet with several Iraqi officials for talks on Iraq's needs of medical

equipment and medicine and will pay field visits to Iraqi cities to get acquainted with the health situation there, particularly in the northern parts of Iraq.

Dr. Abbas said he would present to the Iraqi Red Crescent Society medicine and medical equipment donated by the Algerian people.

An Algerian medical team is currently working in Iraq and providing health services to hospitals in the cities of Baghdad, Najaf and Karbala.

In another development, a delegation representing the AEHC returned to Amman from Baghdad Friday after a week-long visit to Iraq.

The delegation, which was led by AEHC rapporteur, Dr. Musa Abu Hamid, visited several Iraqi hospitals and presented gifts to Iraqis injured in the Gulf war and the incidents which took place afterwards.

The delegation also presented 180 tonnes of medicine, milk and food to the Iraqi people.

Ministry concedes shortcomings in awarding student scholarships

By Caroline Faraj
Special To the Jordan Times

AMMAN — Ministry of Higher Education Secretary General Ahmad Bashairah has admitted that there were shortcomings in processing the high number of applications for higher education scholarships. He estimated the error rate at around 20 per cent.

In an earlier statement to the Jordan News Agency, Petra, Dr. Bashairah said the ministry had received 5,000 applications for the 370 university scholarships available on the basis of the financial status of applicants.

A large number of poor but excellent students have applied or sent petitions to the cultural advisors at the four Jordanian universities, but could not win such scholarships because of the new criteria applied by the Ministry of Higher Education as of the beginning of this academic year. The ministry has designed a special questionnaire aimed at identifying the omissions amongst applicants and set Feb. 1 to Feb. 15 as a deadline for filling in the questionnaire, a period which is sufficient to appraise able, interested and eligible students.

Dr. Bashairah said that the error rate was about 20 per cent or 74 scholarships out of 370 allocated for humanitarian cases. However, other information indicates that the oversight or error rate was between 30 and 40 per cent, which means that some 111 to 148 scholarships were awarded to students who are not in real need, but who came from influential families.

There have been reports about the interference by some deputies to exclude 30 to 35 scholarships awarded to students who are not in need, depriving others who are in dire need.

In Madaba, a Lower House member answered that a well-off girl student whose father is a retired serviceman and mother is an employee got a scholarship.

Higher Education Minister Said Al Tal has instructed the scholarships department to review all applications and verify the accuracy of information provided by applicants to ensure that scholarships should go to eligible students.

Students winning scholarships by the government used to get JD 35 a month as pocket money, but this was reduced to JD 25 and then to JD 20 as of this year, according to Dr. Bashairah. In an interview with Petra published last week, he said that grants for books went down from JD 30 per month to JD 26.

Baker

(Continued from page 1)

Neither the U.S. or Israeli officials would comment on the precise subjects under discussion.

Mr. Baker said earlier in the day he might add meetings later on Friday following his scheduled session with Mr. Shamir if there was progress.

However, he returned directly to his hotel from the prime minister's office and met for 40 minutes with Yitzhak Rabin, a former prime minister and defence minister who belongs to the opposition Labour Party.

Israeli officials do not conduct business for 24 hours following the onset of the Jewish sabbath at sunset Friday — some four hours after the meeting with Mr. Shamir adjourned.

Before Mr. Baker's arrival on Thursday night, Mr. Shamir had said Israel would not be pressured into accepting terms he opposes, such as U.N. role or the participation of Palestinians from Arab Jerusalem in peace talks.

The Palestine Liberation Organisation (PLO) has given the green light for a Palestinian delegation to meet Mr. Baker Saturday, PLO sources in Tunis said.

But the group will be reduced to three men who will hand a memorandum to Mr. Baker, the sources said.

The sources did not say whether the Palestinians in Arab Jerusalem had received replies to 11 questions they submitted to Mr. Baker through the American consulate.

Palestinian sources said earlier the delegation would be reduced to three if there was no reply to the questions or the answer were judged "negative."

The three to meet Mr. Baker are Faisal Al Hussein, the leading Palestinian in the West Bank, Zakaria Al Agha, president of the Gaza Bar Association, and Hanan Ashrawi, a lecturer at the Bir Zeit University, the sources told Reuters.

Later Friday, Mr. Baker made an unannounced tour of Old Jerusalem.

Mr. Baker had planned to take a walking tour of the Old City in March. But he cancelled it after a knife-wielding Arab stabbed four

Jewish women to death in Jerusalem the day before his arrival. He was under heavy guard Friday and Israeli police cleared Arabs from the streets as the U.S. envoy approached.

In Syria, another stop on the secretary's trip, the daily Al Thawra newspaper said Friday that international peace efforts would be "a waste of time" if they cannot make Israel comply with U.N. resolutions for solving its conflict with the Arabs.

"It is important for these countries that have been the source of support for Israel to realise this," Al Thawra said, blaming them for "Israel's intransigence."

"These countries will lose their credibility ... unless they muster enough courage to withdraw their support for Israel and announce that this aggressive entity is responsible for wasting all the opportunities to bring about a just peace in the region," it added in an editorial.

Damascus Radio said Friday that Israel is afraid of peace "because it obstructs the fulfilment of its dream of creating greater Israel, the Zionist scheme that is based on expansionism at the expense of Arab land."

Gorbachev

(Continued from page 1)

earlier Friday, put a brave face on the lacklustre outcome of his summit talks and said Moscow and Tokyo faced many more meetings to get things right.

Mr. Gorbachev left Tokyo for the ancient capital of Kyoto by bullet train and on arrival told the city's business and political leaders: "We have only begun and we must think more deeply about this, and we need to talk much, much more."

Mr. Gorbachev, who kept his luncheon hosts in Kyoto waiting 45 minutes, acknowledged many problems remained before Japan and the Soviet Union could formally sign a peace treaty ending World War II and putting relations on a proper, warmer footing.

"We must deepen trust between Japan and the Soviet Union. Economic cooperation must take place, only then can relations between our two countries improve."

Inquiry panel says U.S. destruction of Iraq deliberate

AMMAN (J.T.) — A two-member team representing the International Commission of Inquiry into U.S. war crimes addressed a press conference in Amman Thursday giving their own impressions about their visit to devastated Iraq in the wake of the war and underlining the fact that the United States had been planning all along to destroy Iraq's economic and military power.

Mr. Adeb Abd and Ms. Gavielle Gemma, representing the U.S. commission, revealed to the press conference the true picture of the situation in Iraq, in the wake of the devastating war, accusing the United States government of exploiting the Kurdish situation in the north as a means to bring further destruction to the Iraqi people and ensure domination over Iraq.

The commission was formed by Mr. Ramsey Clark, former U.S. attorney general and chairman of the National Coalition to Stop U.S. Intervention in the Middle East.

Mr. Clark visited Iraq during the February bombing. Mr. Abd and Ms. Gemma have just returned from an 11-day investigative trip in Iraqi cities.

Following is a statement which Mr. Abd and Ms. Gemma distributed at the press conference:

The Commission of Inquiry is charging the U.S. government of

carrying out horrifying war crimes, with full knowledge that its actions constituted gross violations of international law as pertaining to the use of armed force and military conflict. The evidence clearly shows the U.S. intention was the destruction of Iraq as an independent and sovereign state, and not its withdrawal from Kuwait.

The most sophisticated and barbarous air assault in history and the complete economic embargo of Iraq for eight months is responsible for the deaths of tens of thousands of civilians, the complete and deliberate destruction of Iraq's civilian infrastructure necessary to support life and has left a trail of hunger, disease and misery for the people in every part of the country. This was a war against the children of Iraq by the largest military power in the world.

The U.S. Air Force mercilessly bombed retreating Iraqi military forces as well as civilians on "the highway of death" from Kuwait to Iraq.

The U.S.-led allied coalition has carried out the expulsion of nearly one million Yemenis from Saudi Arabia, the torture and killing of Palestinians in Kuwait and caused severe economic dislocation for Jordan, Yemen and Sudan.

The U.S. has used coercion, bribery and threats to turn the

United Nations into an instrument of war and a party to the death and suffering of the Iraqi people. Instead of issuing a condemnation of the U.S., the U.N. is now assisting in portraying the Bush administration as the great humanitarian and defender of the Kurdish people as a pretext for the direct military occupation of northern Iraq by the U.S. and its European partners. This illegal interference with Iraq's right to solve its internal affairs without foreign interference by the region's former colonisers is a continuation of the U.S. war against Iraq. It is the U.S. through its bombing and embargo which is first and foremost responsible for the suffering of the Kurdish people.

"Truly the Kurdish people are being held hostage to Bush's 'new world order' based on the use of military force to dominate the region's people and resources with the objective of allocating the wealth among the rich countries at the expense of poor nations.

For the sake of the future of humankind it is imperative that the entire truth and facts be documented and made available about the motivation, planning, execution and effects of the U.S.-led coalition's aggression against Iraq.

ANUNCIO

Embajada de España

La Embajada de España tiene el gusto de informar al público que la Cancillería de esta Representación se trasladará próximamente a los nuevos locales según aparece reflejado en el plano.

Durante este periodo, la Embajada permanecerá cerrada, reanudado sus actividades a partir del 24 de abril. Los nuevos números de teléfono: 614166 y 614170

ANNOUNCEMENT

SPANISH EMBASSY

The Spanish Embassy has the pleasure to inform the public that this Mission will move to its new premises as appears on the map.

During this period the Embassy will close to resume its activities as of the 24th of April.

The new telephone numbers are: 614166 & 614170

Jordan Times

An independent Arab political daily published in English by the Jordan Press Foundation.
Established 1975
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Visit with a purpose: Goal is single standard

U.S. SECRETARY of State James Baker's visit to Jordan today is too short to be capable of curing all the ills that have afflicted American-Jordanian relations over the past decades or so, especially during the Gulf crisis and the war that followed. Nevertheless, it is important and necessary if the common goal is to heal the wounds and bring about peace with justice to this troubled part of the world.

A step back in history would easily show that the deterioration in Jordan-U.S. ties began at the time of the Camp David accords, when the Carter administration wanted to sell us a package we would not buy. More recently, the slide reached a nadir over the handling of the Iraqi invasion of Kuwait. The real problems arose when Jordan was convinced Iraq could be persuaded to withdraw through peaceful means and an Arab solution, while the U.S. insisted on using the military option and seeing in the crisis the right opportunity to establish a new world order based on the ashes of a fellow Arab and Muslim country.

While Jordanians have no regrets over the principled position we had taken on the issue of Kuwait, most of us are willing to leave the past behind us if the new American-sponsored world order will be built on true international legitimacy, on fairness and justice for all, and on shouldering the moral responsibility for the destruction of Iraq and its terrible consequences.

The immediate test lies in Mr. Baker's current efforts to solve the Palestinian problem. For each time he talks about the U.S. inability to "force" Israel out of the occupied territories, the need for "confidence building measures" between the Arabs and Israel and the necessity for "direct dialogue" among the parties concerned, without mentioning a word about the new world order that is based on the sanctity of U.N. resolutions and obeying international law that Washington applied to Iraq, the secretary of state and fellow American leaders simply take us back to where we started. This is the point where we thought and believed that the U.S. simply wanted to "take care of the greatest threat to Israel's security," when it attacked and destroyed Iraq's military machine, as Mr. Baker himself admitted upon his return to Washington from his first post-war trip in the region in mid-March.

We would rather not call it a test for Mr. Baker. But when his administration agrees to more and bigger cash transfers to Israel (the last was \$650m for the damages Israel suffered during the war) without any attempt to tie this extra aid to any particular Israeli behaviour, like ending its settlement drive or ending its violations of international law or conventions or agreeing to attend a U.N. peace conference, the issue of questioning American fairness and fortitude is only naturally forced upon us. Plainly, our people would not and could not buy the argument that the U.S. cannot stand up to Israel the way it did to Iraq. Nor would we ever consider it just and fair from the U.S. to turn a deaf ear to Israel's rejection of the land-for-peace formula when Iraq is made the easy target of new and old U.N. resolutions and their implementation almost on daily basis.

We do welcome Mr. Baker and his delegation on his first visit to Jordan. We do wish for successful and productive talks with His Majesty the King and other Jordanian leaders. But we would like him to know that Arabs resent it when Israel's intransigence is met with clichés and hollow words from Washington, just as when its obstinacy is rewarded with more dollars.

ARABIC PRESS COMMENTARIES

COMMENTING on the fresh tour of James Baker in the Middle East Al Ra'i daily said regardless of the character of a peace conference, which Washington is seeking to convene, whether regional or international, the only objective remains the implementation of U.N. Security Council Resolution 242, which guarantees the rights of the Palestinian people in their homeland. Should the secretary of state go along with Israel's ideas, which by no means conform to the implementation of this resolution, said the paper, he would be rendering null and void the concept of international legitimacy. The idea of the regional conference was not objected to by Egypt, which took a different stand from those of Syria and Jordan emphasising that Amman can by no means replace the Palestinians in talks that can determine their future, the paper pointed out. At the same time, said the paper, one has to point out that as the U.S. secretary embarks on his third tour of the region in five weeks, Washington is quite aware of Israel's views and Israel's determination not to involve the PLO in any negotiations and its insistence to ignore Resolution 242. Washington had earlier announced that Baker's tour was designed to open the way for a settlement of the Arab-Israeli conflict and the Palestinian problem on the basis of resolution 242 and 338; and it remains to be seen whether Baker would take serious efforts towards achieving that goal despite Israel's procrastinations, the paper said. In the meantime, the paper added, Jordan will remain totally committed to its national stand and will continue to strive to see to it that the whole Middle East question is settled in accordance with the international legitimacy.

A columnist in Al Ra'i Arabic daily reminds his readers of the fact that the water problem in Jordan remains chronic and could not be solved by cosmetic surgery. Mohammad Daoud says Jordan is not only facing scarcity of water resources, but the amount of water collected in the dams has been found to be polluted to a degree that it could not be used safely in farming. Calling on members of the public to economise in the use of water for domestic and industrial purposes is indeed not enough, although it is important and the water authority ought to enlist the help of water experts to find fresh water resources or come up with means of augmenting the present quantities of water, says the writer.

View from Amman

"America and the New World Order"

IMPERIAL ROME aspired to establish a world order rooted in the idea that all human beings share certain common characteristics regardless of colour, race or geography. This simple yet revolutionary idea was, in turn, a reflection of the Roman discovery of natural law, which, simply put, means that there are certain laws in nature that are universally applicable. The law of gravity is one such law. The Romans also discovered that men, wherever they may be and regardless of colour or race, share certain basic characteristics of humanity: All men are born, and they age and die. All men have a certain level of intelligence, aspirations, and desires and all men seek comfort and try to avoid suffering. This simple idea became the basis for the Roman concept of citizenship as well as the attempt to apply a common law throughout the world.

With the advent of monotheism, Christianity and later Islam this attempt at universalism was given a religious basis. Hence forth and until the age of enlightenment, the search for a universal order was couched in religious terminology. Unlike Christian or Muslim seekers of a universal government based on God's revealed law and His commandments, thinkers since the age of enlightenment go back to the ancient Greek and Roman secular bases. What is good for man is good for him because he discovered it in a positive manner and according to certain rules of logic and reason and not because it is religiously ordained.

In Europe and the United States, this secular trend culminated in the articulation of two opposing ideologies: Socialist-communist and liberal-market oriented systems. Though both shared in their

emphasis on the material well-being of the average man from different perspectives each articulated its own methodologies and modalities in the race to reach its goal. Both the socialist and the liberal — children of Western civilisation — competed for the creation of the new man, the new world, the new heaven on earth. Marxism aspired towards the creation of the new world order by emphasising its call for all the workers of the world to unite. In this endeavour it attempted to submerge the individual in the group; the nation-state in a world-state system that would one day, the doctrine declared, "wither away". International cosmopolitanism would one day replace nationalism: The lion would coexist with the lamb!

America, on the other hand, was, from the beginning, called the new world. Its early settlers viewed themselves as the barbingers of a new "pure" world order. Puritans they were called and puritans they viewed themselves who would build a new order based on justice, liberty and equality. It is here, they thought, where humanity would resurrect the good instinct of man and rise to build a new Jerusalem. Protestants by sect and nature in that they were in protest against the old European systems of tyranny, feudalism and inequality, they found ready expression for their feelings in The Old Testament. Their emphasis on hard work, savings, frugality, eventually gave rise to material success as the measure of human well-being. In this constantly expanding growth of the frontiers of geography, ideas, liberties and economy, Judaic ideas found fertile ground not only to strike roots, but to expand to the point where

the entire system came to be known, by the advent of the twentieth century, as the Judeo-Christian civilisation.

This at once explained two very important features of the new world order that President Bush is now establishing. The first is that America by temperament and historical background views itself as the natural leader and establisher of the new order. An ever-expanding empire, unlike any other in historical annals — if for nothing else but for its military capability and continued technological superiority — is now attempting to span the whole world. This can do because it has the wherewithal as well as the will in it to do so because it can plan in accordance with the scientific method. It won the "race" against Marxism precisely because of its scientificism as well as its covert partnership with Zionism.

The Zionist connection in the second most distinguishing feature of the new world order. It provides the mechanism of this order with ideas and direction in exchange for which it realises its own historical goals. It is no coincidence then that in the three instances in which three American presidents in this century, Woodrow Wilson, F.D. Roosevelt and now George Bush, proposed the establishment of a world system they were highly influenced by the Zionist lobby. Luring Kuwait to behave towards Iraq the way it did before August 2, 1990 and luring Iraq to expose its forces in the wilderness of Hafr Al Ba'n must be viewed against the background of this plan. Not a conspiracy but a well-thought out, well-executed plan that gave the cover not only to reduce Iraq but also to insinuate for the moment, the new world order.

Gorbachev magic fails in Japan

By Jonathan Lyons
Reuter

NAGASAKI, Japan — Soviet President Mikhail Gorbachev, winner of the 1990 Nobel Peace Prize for his foreign policy magic, leaves cash-rich Japan virtually empty-handed after a marathon bargaining that exposed his growing weakness at home and abroad.

Gorbachev came to Tokyo to pursue what some have called the real estate deal of the century — Japanese aid worth an estimated \$28 billion in exchange for a group of remote Soviet-held northern islands off the coast of Hokkaido.

But he had to settle instead for a carefully-crafted diplomatic compromise allowing both sides to claim some gains — and that only after 12 hours of sharp exchanges with Japanese Prime Minister Toshiki Kaifu.

"No one is really happy but at least now we can all go home," said one member of the Soviet delegation. "The real fight is ahead, back in Moscow."

In fact the shadow of Moscow, where the political and economic crisis deepens by the day, never left Gorbachev's four-day visit, the first ever by a Soviet leader.

In a striking performance by the proud and often prickly leader, Gorbachev told anyone who would listen that his perestroika reforms were in trouble and needed help.

And he hinted he was ready for compromise with his radical domestic critics — led by populist Boris Yeltsin — as a bulwark

against resurgent "hardliners" threatening to try to dump him as Communist Party leader, possibly at next Wednesday's central committee plenum.

A Japanese Foreign Ministry official who took part in the talks said Gorbachev had suggested he could not afford the political costs of any concessions over control of the disputed islands, seized by the Red Army in 1945.

Gorbachev also faces demands for his resignation by an unruly but growing independent labour movement and rumblings from the right.

He appealed directly to powerful Japanese business leaders for investment and technological support that could pump up his deflating economy.

On Wednesday Gorbachev told the Japanese parliament the situation at home was "difficult and dramatic" and he said the world community could ill-afford not to back him.

"We are continuing our efforts for our efforts, particularly now as we go through this critical stage of transition."

In the same address, Gorbachev reached towards his critics on the left in an apparent response to Yeltsin's own conciliatory call for round-table talks that could produce a government of consensus.

"A market economy and democracy are not going to complement each other unless political forces take steps in order to make them meet," he said.

"people must come to realise: those in the same boat must row in the same direction."

Settlement

(Continued from page 1)

works, the removal of the mobile homes and the payment of damages.

It said the settlement activity was illegal and added: "This is doubly so given that the invaders are Israeli civilians who carried out their activities under the cover of night," the peccon said.

It named the army as defendant, saying that the army has responsibility for enforcing the military rules that govern the occupied territories.

Noam Arnon, a spokesman for the settlement movement, said of the petition: "We are sure that the property was bought legally, and if he wants to bring it to court, the court will decide."

Israel already has moved about 85,000 Jews into more than 120 heavily guarded settlements in the occupied West Bank and Gaza Strip. Housing Minister Ariel Sharon has pledged to build new houses for an additional 50,000 settlers over the next two years.

Jordan

(Continued from page 1)

Yasser Arafat, apparently have rejected the original idea out of hand partly for fear that the regional conference implied dealing with bilateral Arab-Israeli ties at the expense of solving the Palestinian problem and partly because no direct role was envisioned for the PLO in the parley.

Syria, another key player in Middle East peace effort, has also rejected the "regional" conference idea, and has said that it would not negotiate a separate deal with Israel over the Golan Heights with no regard for the Palestinian problem. Jordan has voiced similar sentiments even though it has not taken a final position on the ideas that have

been floated by the U.S. secretary of state.

But the other shift in the U.S. stance that has been positively viewed here is the inclination by the Bush administration to allow European participation in the "peace conference," according to diplomats and other informed sources.

They said that depending on what impact the new evolving ideas might have on the various parties, the secretary of state might formally propose the conference, or simply leave it to the countries concerned to accept it without formally proposing it.

"The proposal could in fact be presented during Mr. Baker's current tour," one well-informed western diplomat said. "We do not know for sure, but it could be that soon," he added.

His Majesty King Hussein, who will meet Mr. Baker at Aqaba today during the secretary of state's brief stay in Jordan, is expected to reaffirm that the key issues of the entire equation are the Palestinian representation in the peace process and the implementation of Resolution 242, which is the essence of Resolution 338.

Foreign Minister Taher Masri, who met Mr. Baker in Geneva April 12, is believed to have emphasised these two points in addition to allowing for an active European role in any proposed Middle East peace process to ensure support of the application of "international legitimacy."

Jordan supports a land for peace solution based on resolutions 242 and 338 but has accepted proposals to delay the idea of a U.N.-sponsored Middle East conference until more ground was covered through "quiet diplomacy."

Although little is known about the results of the Geneva meeting between Messrs. Baker and Masri, informed sources say that the secretary briefed his Jordanian counterpart on the different ideas being floated around. They



Mikhail Gorbachev

Members of his official delegation were even more blunt. Arkady Volsky, a member of parliament and leading industrial manager, appealed to wary business leaders to go directly to their Soviet counterparts, bypassing the complex web of politics.

"This third force... is the most realistic power in the country," Volsky said.

However all the frank talk and "chequebook politics" went nowhere.

Japanese Finance Minister Ryutaro Hashimoto said on Friday the summit talks would not lead to immediate financial aid for Moscow.

A former Japanese resident of one of the disputed islands said simply: "(Gorbachev) had nothing in his bag."

More worrisome for Gorbachev, his former protégé Yeltsin, in Europe to drum up diplomatic support for his giant Russian Federation, pointedly told reporters he had not come to the West to beg.

"We have enormous resources. Russia once fed Europe. I have not come to ask for aid, but to build bridges," he said.

Germany debates how to open Pandora's box of Stasi files

By Richard Meares
Reture

BONN — Did East Germany plan to blackmail 200,000 West Germans? Did it train the IRA, arrange fatal "accidents" for disloyal citizens who fled West, and have a spy sitting in Chancellor Helmut Kohl's office in Bonn?

Bonn, already stunned by what it has found out about East Berlin's Ministry for State Security (Stasi), may well have the answers to these unresolved questions behind locked doors.

But it cannot decide whether to turn the key.

Millions of files detailing the Stasi's snooping over ordinary citizens as well as spying and other covert activities, are lying in archives in former East Germany while politicians argue over who should be allowed to see them.

East and West German negotiators, unable to agree before unification last October, said access to the documents should be restricted "until an all-German Bundestag (parliament) passed new legislation."

Bundestag deputies who were elected in December hope to iron out their main disagreements shortly and pass a new law before their summer break, but the task will not be easy.

Letting intelligence officials sift through the some 200 kilometres of files in Berlin and nine other cities could shed light on unconfirmed horror stories in the media about Stasi operations, but there is strong opposition.

There is less protest against allowing East Germans to see

their personal dossiers which the Stasi — a secret service and secret police rolled into one — compiled in its drive to sniff out opposition to the Communist regime which it has now joined in oblivion.

But the legislators must decide if names of friends, neighbours and workmates who yielded to Stasi pressure and informed should be blacked out along with embarrassing facts learnt, for example, from bugged telephone conversations.

If they are not, many fear bitter recrimination will dog East German society for years.

Politicians are most deeply split over granting access to Bonn's military and civilian counter-espionage services.

Officials from one agency, the Office for the Protection of the Constitution (BfV), say some 500 top Stasi agents remain active in Western Germany, having swapped allegiance to the Soviet KGB.

Four former Stasi generals, in an unprecedented television broadcast on April 14, offered to keep quiet in exchange for an Amnesty from Bonn for their men, hinting there may otherwise be damaging revelations.

They left an implied threat of new spy scandals, amid fresh reports of an undetected East German agent in Kohl's inner circle.

The day after the broadcast, a Bonn defence ministry official was arrested on suspicion of spying for the former East German communist government for more than two decades. The federal prosecutor's office said the man was considered to be one of the most important Communist spies working in the military area.

The Stasi is already known to have supported West German guerrillas and had agents sitting for years at the top of the BfV, the BND foreign intelligence agency and the army's MAD Intelligence service.

The BfV renewed its plea to be allowed to see the Stasi files after far-left Red Army Faction guerrillas, whom the Stasi trained and sheltered, killed leading industrialist Karsten Rohwedder on April 1.

Justice officials are also sifting through former East Germany's Nazi archives and have found information they say may point to Stasi protection for war criminals who were willing to cooperate with them.

Gulf war bill: \$32.2b

WASHINGTON (AP) — The latest instalment of the U.S. bill for the Gulf war is \$32.2 billion, according to the chairman of the Senate Appropriations Committee.

Also, more than \$3 billion of that will come from U.S. taxpayers because the allies have not yet fully delivered promised aid, Senator Robert Byrd said Thursday.

The price tag will grow by an unknown amount, probably tens of billions of dollars. The \$32.2 billion is only part of what the war and its aftermath are expected to cost, according to administration figures released by Mr. Byrd, a West Virginia Democrat.

The numbers were the first cost update since Congress passed war-financing legislation last month requiring regular reports from the administration on expenses and foreign contributions.

A separate bill last year provided an initial \$1 billion towards the U.S. troop deployment, Operation Desert Shield. Many members of Congress have been critical of America's allies for being slow to deliver their promised aid.

The war-costs bill included a ban on arms sales to nations that still owe promised payments. But the measure gave U.S. President

Kohl's ruling Christian Democrats (CDU) and their CSU allies agree. Interior Minister Wolfgang Schauble said the files could reveal important details of Stasi collaboration with the red army faction.

German state-run television has said the Stasi also trained Cuban and Angolan fighters and had links with Palestinian guerrillas under Abu Nidal and with the Irish Republican Army (IRA).

"Anyone who does not want to have a look at them (the files) is making himself artificially stupid," the conservative weekly Rheinischer Merkur said.

But Kohl's coalition partners, the Liberal Free Democrats (FDP), whose support is vital to pass any law, are not keen.

Like the opposition Social Democrats, they say that giving the secret services broad access to the files would run counter to Germany's strict data protection laws.

Schauble has proposed separating personal files on East Germans from the other Stasi files to get around this, but FDP interior policy spokesman Burkhard Hirsch said this was not possible in practice.

He said police were already allowed to check files, but only after specific request related to criminal offences such as Rohwedder's murder.

They have a harder time checking vague claims often based on leaked documents or confessions by former Stasi officers.

Newspapers said last year that several East Germans who defected, including a top footballer, were killed by Stasi agents in faked accidents in the early 1980s.

Stefan Schwarz, a CDU deputy keen to open up the files, says they contain dossiers on 200,000 potential West German blackmail victims and that details on 10 times that many West Germans were stored in Stasi computers.

Justice officials are also sifting through former East Germany's Nazi archives and have found information they say may point to Stasi protection for war criminals who were willing to cooperate with them.

George Bush leeway to continue weapons deliveries to countries in the process of paying the pledged aid.

So far, six countries have paid just under \$29 billion in cash.

The United States is using those funds to pay the bulk of the latest war bills. The rest, more than \$3 billion, is coming from some \$15 billion in federal money provided in the war-financing legislation signed by Mr. Bush on April 10.

Overall, six countries pledged to give the United States \$54.6 billion for its war costs. They delivered \$33.8 billion as of April 12.

"We expect our allies to pay their fair share, and at least to pay what they pledged to pay," Mr. Byrd warned on the Senate floor.

Mr. Byrd said the \$32.2 billion figure submitted by the Defence Department did not include the costs of actual combat or the replacement and repair of some equipment lost during the fighting.

No one knows what the final bill will be, Mr. Byrd said.

But he noted that the administration initially estimated that costs of the war and removing troops and equipment from the Middle East would be \$68.5 billion.

Sovereignty

(Continued from page 1)

right to have access to technology and to develop itself," said a young university researcher who also asked not to be named.

Despite the friction between the leadership and the people, there seems to be a consensus in resenting the ceasefire plan and its provisions. Iraqi newspapers, which uncharacteristically published the full details of the plan, continue to attack the provisions which are seen as aimed at containing and crippling Iraq.

A closed National Assembly session, which approved the ceasefire resolution (SCR 687), turned into a heated debate. None of the 120 members could easily vote in favour of its acceptance. Neither the foreign minister nor the speaker of the National Assembly could defend it.

Everyone realised that none of the views aired was really relevant. As speaker of the National Assembly, Mr. Saadi Mehdi Saleh, put it at the opening of the session Iraqis simply had "no choice".

But officials — who like many Iraqis evade discussing the details of the plan — still hope that the ceasefire will give the government and the country the breathing space needed to enable them to stand on their feet again.

Some officials and analysts believe that the Iraqi leadership has actually bought time for it to start reconstructing a wrecked country and embark on political changes and democratic reforms that will eventually ease off international restrictions on Baghdad.

The danger, officials admit, that by then the Baathist government would have lost its complete independence and would have been practically transformed into a Western puppet. "We really do not have space to manoeuvre but we are resisting being turned into just another American puppet in the region," said one official.

Baghdad's official acceptance of Resolution 687 has been received with cynicism. Many cannot accept the highly costly and tragic shift from defiance to submission. "We leapt from no, no, no to an indefinite yes..." said a university professor.

"The acceptance of the ceasefire plan seems to have further eroded the credibility of the leadership, but at this stage most people are more concerned about their daily survival than delving into a philosophical argument about lost dignity."

"We have suffered enough. We are grateful that we are still alive," said a novelist.

The ceasefire, however, has not eliminated official, and even public, fears that the country might be divided, especially after the armed rebellion in the Kurdish north and the Shiite south.

Officials fear that the West and Iran will exploit the lingering discontent in the north and south, and the tragedy of thousands of refugees to interfere in the internal affairs of Iraq as a prelude to fragmenting the country into three parts.

The massive airlift of U.S. aid to thousands of Kurdish refugees in the north was mainly viewed as a political tool to deepen the split between Baghdad and the Kurds. But as one official admitted, the government could not stop the operation and it did not even have the means to replace the American aid of food supplies. "It is ironic. Regardless of Washington's political aims it is practically helping the government. We simply do not have sufficient means to help all of the refugees," said one official.

The same applies to the south where the U.S. army and allies had distributed food to Iraqis in the areas they were holding. Although the Iraqi government has welcomed American withdrawal there are concerns that Tehran will seize the opportunity to fuel unrest in the predominantly Shiite south. "Tehran might use the refugee plight in the south to cross the border under the pretext of feeding the starving refugees," said one Iraqi writer who is close to the government.

But the government still believes that the U.S. is not really interested in geographically tearing Iraq apart, especially if the result will be a stronger Iran and the spread of Islamic fundamentalism in the region. "We do not think that the geographic division of Iraq... but it might be interested in deepening sectarian and ethnic friction to maintain a weak central government in Baghdad," said the Iraqi official.

Iraqi refineries repair damage, resume production

AL DORA REFINERY, Iraq (R) — Iraq, its people starved of fuel by U.S. and allied air raids during the Gulf war, has started producing petrol again and is confident that its refineries will be fully operational by June.

"We started production again three days ago," Mofaq Khalil Ibrahim, deputy general manager of Al Dora, Iraq's second-largest refinery, told foreign journalists Friday.

"We already started giving them (state distribution companies) products from yesterday," he added during a tour of the refinery in the southwestern outskirts of Baghdad.

Mr. Ibrahim said Al Dora, which was repeatedly bombed by the United States and its Gulf war allies, had a pre-war production capacity of 92,000 barrels per day — approaching 25 per cent of Iraq's entire refining capacity.

Mr. Ibrahim said the refinery, which was inspected by President Saddam Hussein Sunday, was currently operating at 75 per cent of capacity.

"We are producing gasoline, kerosene, gas oil and black fuel," he added.

He said 1,300 workers — three times the normal workforce — had been repairing the refinery round the clock since the Gulf war guns fell silent at the end of February.

He said trade sanctions imposed by the U.N. Security Council following Iraq's Aug. 2 invasion of Kuwait had not impeded reconstruction work, adding that the refinery still had adequate supplies of chemical additives needed in the refining process.

"We have depended 100 per cent on our own experience and

resources — human and material. It has been very difficult taking into consideration the embargo," he said.

Shortages of gasoline have hit ordinary Iraqis hard.

The government ration — 30 litres every 20 days — is scarcely enough to cover daily trips to and from work.

Petrol is available on the black market, but at a price. The government ration costs 90 fils (30 cents on the official exchange rate) a litre. The black market rate is six dinars (more than \$20).

Al Thawra, newspaper of the ruling Baath Party, said on Monday that Iraq's largest refinery at Baiji, 200 kilometres northwest of Baghdad, had resumed production.

The refinery, which met 70 per cent of Iraq's needs before being crippled in the war, would be producing at full capacity by the end of May, it added on Monday.

Al Dora's maintenance manager, Dathar Al Kaskab, said they too were expected to reach full capacity by then. "We expect to be at full capacity in one month."

At home, Iraqis were without electricity in the aftermath of the war.

Things have improved — particularly for the people of Baghdad — and the authorities say further improvements are on the way.

The Iraq News Agency (INA) reported on Thursday that four of the six generating units at Iraq's thermal power station at Baiji had been repaired.

The repaired units will satisfy all the electricity needs of Baghdad, Al Anbar, Salahaddin and Tamin provinces, it said.

The four provinces are home to more than one third of Iraq's 18 million people.

position had retracted during the second meeting because the number of points mentioned was 11 instead of the 18 from the first session.

Aga Khan

(Continued from page 1)

\$178 million to help the most vulnerable people in Iraq and a further \$400 million for refugees on the Turkish and Iranian borders.

Turkey said Friday the U.N.-Iraq accord to set up refugee centres inside Iraq, and the U.S. decision that allied troops should set up and guard safe havens for Kurdish refugees were complementary.

"One can think that... (the two) complement each other. (U.S.) President (George) Bush in fact envisages that the temporary settlements should be turned over to the United Nations at a later stage," Foreign Ministry spokesman Murat Sungar said.

French President Francois Mitterrand said his Foreign Minister Roland Dumas was to meet Mr. Perez de Cuellar on Friday night to discuss the Kurdish crisis.

Mr. Mitterrand, in Romania on the second day of a state visit, was replying during a news conference to a question about the allied safe haven plan for Kurdish refugees to Iraq. The plan involves the United States, Britain and France.

Team off to Iraq to begin rebuilding of Karbala hospital

By P.V. Vivekanand
Jordan Times Staff Reporter

AMMAN — A team of volunteers, including five Jordanian engineers, left for Iraq Friday evening in the first phase of a project to rebuild hospitals and establish centres for victims of the Gulf war.

The relief convoy, organised by the Middle East Action Network (MEAN), included foodstuffs as well as baby milk in addition to cement and related building material to launch the physical reconstruction of a hospital in the Shiite Holy City of Karbala in southern Iraq.

"This is our first project," said Sadallah Attrib, founder and chairman of MEAN. "The hospital escaped relatively undamaged from the war only to be devastated in the (Shiite) rebellion that followed," said the relief worker, who preferred to be known as Sadallah.

Sadallah, who has been raising funds in Europe, Australia, New Zealand and India for the project estimated to cost between \$2 million and \$2.5 million, said the hospital was now limited to its reception area where emergency cases of children are being admitted.

"The outer structure of the building is left intact, but every room inside and the entire medical equipment have been totally destroyed," he told the Jordan Times.

According to Sadallah, the project will be completed in about three months' time, but in the meantime his organisation, which has an international membership, has also launched programmes to care for children orphaned and others disabled in the war.

"If one looks for relief pro-

jects in Iraq, there are millions," he said. "But the first priority is to programmes aimed at saving lives."

MEAN has sent generators and medicine as well as other relief supplies to Iraq. It gave particular attention to treatment of diarrhoeal diseases among Iraqi children. "Diarrhoea cases are too many," Sadallah said. "First we sent in (intravenous) drips and then oral therapy tablets."

MEAN was joined Friday by the Ananda Marga Universal Relief Team (AMURT), an India-based organisation which hopes to help rebuild a hospital in the southern Iraqi city of Basra and set up an orphanage. It is also seeking areas where it could offer additional help.

"We are going into Iraq with an open mind," said Ramananda Avadhuta, executive director of the organisation which draws its objective from the spiritual concept of "service to God is service to humanity."

"We will assess the actual situation at various Iraqi health facilities and help wherever we can," said Ramananda, who travelled along with the relief convoy (Ananda Marga members use only one name; Avadhuta is a title).

AMURT has also distributed food and other relief aid to Jordanians who were forced to leave Kuwait as a result of the Gulf crisis.

Sadallah, who led Friday's convoy, does not underestimate the magnitude of the task that awaits relief organisations in Iraq. "But no project is too big for us since we believe that there are enough good people around in the world who are willing to help a good cause," he said.



A relief worker takes stock of the devastation at Karbala's Al Hussein hospital (photo courtesy Middle East Action Network).



Sadallah Attrib

Sadallah, who was a member of the Gulf Peace Team which sought in vain to prevent the Gulf war by setting up a camp on the Iraqi-Saudi border since December, has been in touch with hundreds of organisations around the world soliciting help for relief for the Iraqi people.

"In Austria, we put an advertisement saying the cost of one packet of cigarettes or a bottle of beer would save the life of an Iraqi child," he recounted. "We were overwhelmed by the response: Thousands sent in just the price of one packet of cigarette or one bottle of beer, making us think whether we should have referred to the cost of a motor car."

Sadallah, who was born in Manchester, England, in 1953, but adopted the new name after converting to Islam in 1984.

"We were against war from the beginning," Sadallah said, explaining how he came to found and head MEAN. "So I left England in October to set up the peace camp in Iraq, but it did not work. Then the only way to extend help was through relief work, and that is what we are trying to do."

Sadallah, an associate of former pop singer Cat Stevens who has embraced Islam and adopted the name Yusuf, 41, came to Iraq to join the camp even though his three-year daughter was in hospital in a coma. "I could have done nothing to help her except praying since I was not a doc-

tor," he said. "But I saw hundreds of children who were dying in Iraq, whom I could have helped." He added, looking at the severe impact of the Gulf war on the Iraqi people, "I was prior to the actual outbreak of the war in January."

Sadallah's daughter, who turned three weeks old just before Iraq's invasion of Kuwait, was born in Jordan and was in the hospital in London when she was three months old. She was left in Iraq with her mother, who may have to stay for three months to care for her.

MEAN will pay for the actual expenses of the relief work, but it is not a charity. It is a voluntary organisation, he said.

"We are willing to offer our free services to anyone who wants to send help to the Iraqis," he added.



While the outer structure of the hospital is intact, every room inside has been totally destroyed

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Executives see worker's competence falling

U.S. capital spending rising at slowest pace in five years

WASHINGTON (Agencies) — Spending by American businesses to expand production is rising at the slowest pace in five years, the U.S. Commerce Department has estimated.

Analysts say the slow growth is chiefly due to the U.S. recession's pinch on profits and clouded prospects for economic recovery. A survey of 1991 investment plans conducted between January and March showed companies intended to increase spending by 3.2 per cent after allowing for inflation, the weakest rate of increase since 1986 when spending fell 3.1 per cent.

That follows actual rises in real capital spending of 4.5 per cent in 1990 and 10.4 per cent in 1989.

Without allowing for inflation, spending in 1991 was forecast to

grow by 2.5 per cent to an annual rate of \$546.4 billion. That is nearly unchanged from a survey of investment plans done last October and November when businesses said they would boost 1991 spending by 2.4 per cent.

In the October-November survey, real capital spending was projected to rise only 0.4 per cent in 1991, so the latest 3.2 per cent rise in intentions seem to suggest a significant pickup. But the department revised its estimate for price changes to forecast a decline of 0.7 per cent instead of a rise of two per cent.

Lynn Reaser, senior economist with First Interstate Bancorp of Los Angeles, said it would be "a piece of good news" if such price deflation occurs and suggested it could happen for some capital

goods like computers. But Reaser stressed that the relatively unchanged projection for nominal spending, and some large decreases in the manufacturing sector, were more significant.

The big car-making companies, which lost millions of dollars in the final three months of 1990 as the economy slid into recession and consumer spending dried up, said they would cut spending by 12.5 per cent this year instead of decreasing it only by 4.7 per cent.

Manufacturers of durable goods that are designed to last three years or more intend to reduce spending in 1991 by 2.5 per cent instead of by 0.8 per cent as they indicated in last fall's survey.

Meanwhile, more mid-sized

U.S. companies are turning to automation because of a perceived decline in the American worker's competence.

According to a survey, top executives said that international business is a key factor for them.

The survey queried the 100 members of the American Business Conference (ABC), a Washington-based trade group of mid-sized, growth companies like underwear-maker Fruit of the Loom Inc. and Cable Television's USA Network.

Only 34 per cent of the 70 officials responding to the survey last year said they believe American workers' competence has improved in the past decade. Forty-one per cent think worker competence has declined.

Frankfurt launches bid to house 'Eurofed'

FRANKFURT (R) — Frankfurt, Germany's top financial centre and one of Europe's key financial markets, has launched a campaign to house a European central bank against rival bids from London, Luxembourg, Paris and Amsterdam.

But city officials said they would adopt a softly-softerly approach in a bid to win friends in high European places.

"We want to help people feel good about Frankfurt and prepare the ground so that Frankfurt has the best possible reputation and the best possible chance," city mayor designate, Andreas von Schoeler — due to take office next month — told news conference.

Under the slogan, "Frankfurt, the natural choice," the city plans to approach decision-makers throughout Europe to canvass support for its claim.

But the German city will face tough competition from other European centres.

In a letter circulated in Brussels last week Dutch Finance Minister Wim Kok lobbied in support of Amsterdam.

Luxembourg Prime Minister Jacques Santer says his country has reserved a plot of land for the future European central bank, dubbed the Eurofed in a reference to the U.S. Federal Reserve, the U.S. central bank.

But Frankfurt says it can offer the bank the choice of two city centre sites. "We are looking at prime sites in the heart of the Frankfurt banking centre," said Von Schoeler.

Frankfurt officials accept that the rules of the game are vague — the Eurofed's statutes are still on the drawing board and there is no deadline for choosing a site — but they want to ensure Frankfurt heads the list of candidates.

The Eurofed would manage a single European currency and control the 12-nation bloc's monetary policy in a future economic and monetary union.

Iraq to demand higher OPEC production quota

NICOSIA (R) — Iraq plans to press OPEC to increase its crude oil production quota.

"Iraq's pre-war export quota of three million b.d (barrels per day) was not enough for its needs," Prime Minister Saadoun Hammadi told the Baghdad weekly Alif Ba'a.

"Iraq will explain that and will demand and work within the legal framework of OPEC to have a higher oil production quota for Iraq than before the war," he said.

Even before 1990 Iraq was operating on an austere budget because revenue from oil did not cover the cost of foreign debt incurred during the 1980-88 war with Iran, Hammadi added.

U.N. trade sanctions halted Iraq's exports soon after its invasion of Kuwait. Gulf war ceasefire terms envisage their resumption, impounding a share of oil earnings for reparations but making allowance for foreign debt

payments and civilians needs. Iraq asked the U.N. Security Council Tuesday for permission to sell nearly a billion dollars worth of oil on the open market to buy food.

The Iraqi request to sell oil to pay for essential imports covering a four month period implies exports of 400,000 to 600,000 b.d, Iraqi and Western oil industry sources have said.

"They'll need to sell around 600,000 b.d," one U.S.-based executive said. He said it would take Iraq about 40 days to start up production should the U.N. give its permission.

His rough estimate of the volume of sales was based on an average price of \$16 a barrel for Iraqi grades of crude oil. Other industry estimates, based on \$18 prices, suggest exports in the order of 450,000 b.d would be likely.

A quick start up will depend largely upon Saudi Arabia and

Turkey's willingness to reopen Iraqi export pipelines running through their countries.

"If the Iraqis are able to get the Turks and Saudis to open up (the pipelines) again, they should not have too much trouble exporting these amounts," said another U.S. oil man.

An Iraqi source in Europe and Western industry sources estimate that around 20 million barrels of Iraqi crude is stored at the Turkish and Iraqi ends of the pipeline.

The sources agreed that the first oil for export, apart from the stored barrels, would be made by the end of the month and piped out through Turkey.

Before Iraq's invasion of Kuwait throughout down the Turkish pipeline was running at 1.6 million b.d, at 900,000 b.d down the Saudi line and 300,000 b.d through the Gulf export terminal at Mina Al Fika.

AMMAN EXCHANGE RATES

Sunday, April 14, 1991
Central Bank official rates

	Central banks		Current rates	
	Buy	Sell		
			Swiss franc	474.2 477.0
			French franc	119.0 119.7
			Japanese yen (for 100)	495.9 498.9
U.S. dollar	676.0	680.0	Dutch guilder	356.6 358.7
Pound Sterling	1202.2	1209.4	Swedish crown	111.9 112.6
			Italian lire (for 100)	54.2 54.5
Deutschmark	401.7	404.1	Belgian franc (for 10)	195.6 196.8

LONDON EXCHANGE RATES

LONDON (R) — Following are the buying and selling rates for leading world currencies and gold against the dollar at midsession on the London foreign exchange and bullion markets Friday.

One Sterling	1.7415/25	U.S. dollar	
One U.S. dollar	1.1540/45	Canadian dollar	
	1.7185/95	Deutsche mark	
	1.9360/70	Dutch guilder	
	1.4588/95	Swiss franc	
	35.24/28	Belgian franc	
	5.7875/75	French franc	
	1270/1271	Italian lire	
	137.85/95	Japanese yen	
	6.1510/60	Swedish crown	
	6.6780/30	Norwegian crown	
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Belgian minister expects Sabena sale after costly facelift

BRUSSELS (R) — Belgium would probably sell off its majority stake in the country's loss-making airline Sabena, but the firm first needed a costly facelift.

Transport Minister Jean-Luc Dehaene was quoted as saying.

It was like trying to turn an old lady into an attractive bride, he told the Dutch-language weekly Panorama. Sabena's financial situation at the moment was "too rotten to excite possible lovers," he added.

"The state has to invest a lot of money in Sabena once more," he said. "The alternative is to go bankrupt, or to sell the whole thing for peanuts. It'll cost money in any case."

Sabena S.A. posted a 6.56 billion franc (\$202 million) loss for 1990. This year it expects an operating loss of 4.25 billion francs (\$130.9 million).

Its new boss, Pierre Godtfroid, has drawn up a major restructuring plan aiming for a 600 million franc (\$18.5 million) operating profit in 1992.

But 2,204 of the airline's 11,800 jobs will go, working hours will be increased and salaries frozen.

The government has agreed to contribute nine billion francs (\$277 million) but the company still needs to find private backing for its recapitalisation.

Dehaene, who is deputy prime minister, was quoted as saying only two or three big airlines would survive in the future European air transport market.

"And Sabena will not be one of them. It's better for Sabena to disappear. It's too expensive a way of keeping our flag in the spotlight," Dehaene added in the interview.

Belgium should retain a blocking minority within a new big umbrella airline to ensure the survival of Brussels' Zaventem airport, he said.

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Michelin posts staggering \$857 m loss in '90

PARIS (AP) — Reflecting an overall slump in the tire industry, France's Michelin announced that it suffered a staggering loss of 4.8 billion francs (\$857 million) last year.

The bottom line for the world's biggest tire manufacturer in 1990 compared with a net profit of 2.45 billion francs (\$437 million) in 1989.

But Michelin said sweeping job cuts should help return it to profitability by 1992. Slumping car sales in Europe and North America are forcing tire manufacturers throughout the world to retrench while struggling to maintain market shares.

This restructuring, coupled with overcapacity and high inventories, has provoked a price war that has slashed profit margins.

Michelin announced earlier this month that it plans to slash its global workforce by 16,000, or some 13 per cent of the group's total payroll, in 1991 and 1992 in an effort to cut costs.

Financial analysts are predicting that Michelin will recover somewhat this year but still post a loss of between 1 billion and 2 billion francs (\$178 million and \$357 million), excluding exceptional items.

Michelin officials do not disagree, but say the group should return to profitability by the end of this year, assuming an expected upswing in the U.S. market materialises.

By 1992, company officials predict, Michelin should show a profit.

TODAY AT

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★ **KAFROON**

Show: 11:30, 1:30 p.m.

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Show: 11:30, 1:00 p.m.

Cinema **NIJOUN** Tel: 675571

Adel Imam in

★ **Dangerous recorder**

(Arabic)

Show: 12:30, 3:30, 8:30, 10:30 p.m.

Cinema **PLAZA** Tel: 699238

Laila Elwi in

★ **THE INTOXICATED**

(Arabic)

Show: 3:00, 6:30, 8:30, 10:30 p.m.

★ **LIVE HARD**

Show: 10:30, 12:00, 1:30, 5:00

Gorbachev to seek union treaty with only 9 of 15 republics

TOKYO (Agencies) — Soviet President Mikhail Gorbachev said Friday that he is giving up on six independence-minded republics at least temporarily and will try to work out a new union treaty with just nine of the 15 republics.

"We shall have the treaty signed by those who are prepared to do so," Gorbachev told a press conference after his summit meeting with Japanese Prime Minister Toshiki Kaifu.

In an attempt to get the basic unifying document of his country rewritten before the nation falls apart, Gorbachev said only the nine republics that participated in a recent referendum on preserving the union would be represented at a conference Tuesday to hammer out the last details of the treaty.

Gorbachev gave no indication that he was changing his longstanding insistence that the six independence-minded republics follow a nearly impossible secession law in order to separate from the Soviet Union.

But his announcement did indicate that he would now seek common ground to salvage his country among the nine republics that wish to remain united, and no longer delay the union treaty negotiations trying vainly to satisfy the secessionists.

"The immediate task is saving the state," he said.

Six independence-minded republics refused to conduct the referendum on March 17. They are Moldavia, the southern republics of Georgia and Armenia, and the Baltic states of Lithuania, Latvia and Estonia.

The other nine republics voted

overwhelmingly to keep the Soviet Union whole. They constitute more than 90 per cent of the population and territory of the Soviet Union.

Gorbachev hopes the new union treaty, which transfers considerable powers from the central government to the republics, will sort out conflicting orders that have left no one with the power to govern.

The Soviet president said one person had suggested that the republic leaders be locked into a room and not allowed to leave until they reach a decision. Gorbachev, who said earlier in the week that his country is in danger of falling into "the chaos that gives birth to dictatorship," also warned that he may take severe action to keep order.

The Soviet people want reform and a market economy, but they also want "law and order and firm action. You must not confuse firm action and dictatorship."

"If the law cannot be applied, that is anarchy," he said.

Meanwhile strikes in the Republic of Georgia in support of independence from the Soviet Union spread to Moscow-controlled enterprises Wednesday, the Georgian news agency Iveria reported.

The stoppages, coupled with further disturbances in the southern republics, underlined problems facing Gorbachev in his bid to dampen separatism in all corners of the country while tackling an economic crisis.

The Georgian plants went on strike included electrical and computer plants and a locomotive factory.

The southern republic last week formally declared inde-

pendence and backed a rail strike and economic blockade of the rest of the Soviet Union to try to force Soviet Interior Ministry troops out of the region of South Ossetia.

Moscow considers the independence declaration invalid.

At least 50 people have died in the area in months of clashes between Georgians and Ossetians who want no part of Georgia's drive for independence.

The official Soviet News Agency TASS said troops trying to disarm the factions had confiscated explosives, grenades, hundreds of rifles and tens of thousands of cartridges in the last two days. They also detained more than 100 people.

Railwaymen and workers at Georgia's Black Sea oil and coal ports of Batumi and Poti continued to prevent freight from leaving the republic.

The blockade aggravated the isolation of the neighbouring republic of Armenia, already partly cut off from the rest of the Soviet Union by the third Caucasian republic, Azerbaijan, which has been preventing the passage of freight trains.

Armenia and Azerbaijan are in dispute over the Armenian dominated enclave of Nagorno-Karabakh, ruled by Azerbaijan.

Armenia's Armenpress news agency said all freight through and from Georgia was being blocked, but that some trains had got through from Azerbaijan Monday for the first time in a week.

In a further indication of tension between Armenia and Azerbaijan, the daily Izvestia alleged that the murder last week of a Soviet colonel in Rostov-On-Don

had been the work of separatist Armenians from Nagorno-Karabakh.

The colonel, Vladimir Blakhodin, was deputy chief of the Interior Ministry troops in the Caucasus region.

The Interfax News Agency cited the Azerbaijan Interior Ministry as saying two Azeris had been killed Wednesday in an attack coming from Nagorno-Karabakh. In addition, it said unidentified gunmen had killed the driver and passenger of a car in the enclave.

The parliament of Lithuania, one of the Baltic republics which, like Georgia, seek independence from the Soviet Union, decided Wednesday to grant citizenship to anyone resident in the republic on June 15 this year.

Anti-independence campaigners had accused the nationalist government of discriminating against the Russian minority by preparing laws that would make them second class citizens.

The amendment passed by the Lithuanian parliament banned dual nationality, meaning that ethnic Russians and Poles living in the republic would have to give up Soviet citizenship to get a Lithuanian passport.

TASS later reported that the parliament of Armenia, which also seeks independence but is less militant than Georgia, had voted to nationalise the property of the republic's Communist Party and its youth wing.

The parliamentary resolution said the Communists, who held power in Armenia until they were ousted in free elections last year, had used their power to amass huge material resources at the expense of the state.

Philippine military leader's brother takes over air force

MANILA (Agencies) — The new air force chief Friday said the Gulf war demonstrated that air power is key to national defence.

Speaking at a change-of-command ceremony, Brig-Gen. Loven Abadía said his main concern would be to modernise the country's armed forces, one of the weakest in the region.

Abadía said the Gulf war "invariably demonstrated that no nation can claim a credible defence posture even if it has the most well-trained ground forces if it does not have a strong air force to depend on."

"A credible air defence capability remains one of the key tools in the assertion or projection of national sovereignty," Abadía said.

Abadía said he will seek more funds from congress for the modernisation plan, which should help the nation's economic development and the local aerospace industry. He did not spell out details of the plan.

The Philippine Armed Forces are virtually dependent on U.S. support for equipment and funds obtained from Washington's rental for the use of its six military bases here.

Most of the air and naval fleet are second-hand U.S. planes and vessels acquired through donations or aid. Even senior officers joke that their fighter aircraft are older than the pilots.

President Corason Aquino Thursday named Abadía as air force commander two weeks after making the controversial appointment of his younger brother, Lt. Gen. Lisandro Abadía, as the new military chief of staff.

Mrs. Aquino passed over four more senior officers to appoint the military chief. In protest, Maj. Gen. Alexander Aguirre resigned as deputy chief of staff.



Gen. Alexander Aguirre the third ranking post in the military.

The appointment marks the first time a brother team has been named to hold the highest levels of command in the Philippine military.

The new air force chief said he and his brother were "humbled and overwhelmed by the courage and the wisdom" of Mrs. Aquino in making the appointments.

The issue of promotions is sensitive because favouritism in the military under the late President Ferdinand Marcos helped lead to his downfall and the rise of Mrs. Aquino in a 1986 popular revolt.

Abadía said his "primordial concern" was to uphold constitutional democracy.

"History has shown that once a nation's military force meddles into the political arena, it is bound to encumber and overreach itself into the other affairs of the state. In the process the armed forces end up ... killing the very way of life it has initially sworn to defend and protect," Abadía said.

Mrs. Aquino has survived at least seven uprisings by mutinous troops since taking office in 1986.

The Philippine military chief defended his brother's appointment as commander of the air force, saying this "accidental relationship" must not trigger fresh discord in the armed forces.

"There will be an issue on his accidental relationship with me," said Lieutenant-General Lisandro Abadía during the installation of his elder brother as air force chief.

"The greatest offence we can commit is to deny an officer a promotion he richly deserves just because he is the older brother of his commanding officer," the military chief of staff said.

Lieutenant-General Abadía threatened Thursday to court martial maverick General Aguirre, whom he alleged had tried to block his appointment as chief of staff.

"Once he oversteps and really does something blatant ... I will just court martial him ... he's dead," he told reporters.

Aguirre accused Aquino of bypassing himself and other senior generals.

A million dutch cyclists suffer sore backsides

AMSTERDAM (R) — Badly-designed saddles cause a million sore backsides in the cycling-mad Netherlands, according to Delft University Department of Industrial Design. Problems include bruising and irritation to sex organs, pain in urinating and temporary loss of libido, ANP news agency said. The average Dutchman cycles over 1,000 kilometres a year.

Mutiny On The Bounty ship for sale

SYDNEY (R) — Australia's sinking economy has forced the replica of Captain William Bligh's ship Bounty to go under the auctioneer's hammer, its owners said. The replica, built in 1979 by film-maker Dino De Laurentiis for the movie The Bounty, was bought by a consortium of 40 Australians in 1986 when De Laurentiis's financial fortunes took a turn for the worse. It has since been used for pleasure cruises on Sydney Harbour, for Pacific voyages and as the setting for a television series about British explorer Captain James Cook. The ship is an almost exact replica of the square-rigger aboard which 25 crewmen mutinied against Bligh in 1789, casting him and 18 of his supporters into a lifeboat near Tonga in the South Pacific. The descendants of the mutineers, now numbering in their thousands, live on Pitcairn and Norfolk Islands in the Pacific. "It's not rare, it's unique," Ken Rosebery, of Bounty Voyages Pty Ltd, said of the ship. "It was built for a film so it had to operate as a ship today's world but also look like a tall ship."

Headmaster to pay pupils if they don't wreck canteen

LINKÖPING, Sweden (R) — The headmaster of a Swedish secondary school has offered to pay pupils up to 10,000 crowns (\$1,650) if they stop wrecking the school canteen, Swedish media reported Sunday. Headmaster Svante Hanes made the first payment of 1,000 crowns (\$165) to the Student Council and will pay 200 crowns (\$33) a day until the end of term if the canteen remains undamaged at Ljungskilda School in Linköping in central Sweden. "If everybody pulls together, the student council can earn a lot of money," the Ostgöta Correspondent newspaper quoted Hanes as saying. Some teachers were not so enthusiastic, and said the pupils should learn to respect property without being paid. "It's like saying, 'give me 200 crowns and I won't smash your face,'" one of them told the newspaper.

Hungarian premier recovers from cancer

BUDAPEST (R) — Hungarian Prime Minister Jozsef Antall, who has been under treatment for cancer, has made a full recovery and plans a heavy schedule of foreign visits, newspapers said. Tests he underwent before travelling to London for the opening of the new European Bank for Reconstruction and Development showed no remaining sign of the disease. Antall told the Hungarian News Agency (MTI) that he would now go ahead with foreign visits. Antall was diagnosed last October as suffering from non-Hodgkins disease, a form of cancer known to be curable. Antall heads Hungary's first non-Communist government in four decades after winning a landslide victory in multi-party elections a year ago.

Kidnapped doctor chained in a tent

BIANCO, Italy (R) — A doctor's four-month kidnap ordeal ended when police found him chained inside a mountain tent in southern Italy. Paramilitary police said Agostino De Pascale, 34, was in such a state of exhaustion that it took them several minutes to convince him they were not his guards playing a sick joke. The long-bearded De Pascale, starved and thin, was seen signalling with a cigarette lighter from the tent above the village of Sarno, in Calabria. Police said his relatives had paid a ransom of 700 million lire (\$560,000) but that it seemed the kidnappers had no intention of releasing him. De Pascale was seized from his clinic near Loric last December. Six Italians are currently in the hands of kidnap gangs and are believed to be held in the Aspromonte Mountains.

START talks resume in Geneva

GENEVA (AP) — U.S.-Soviet talks on a treaty cutting long-range nuclear arsenals resumed Friday after a monthlong break, with no indication of when the largely completed draft agreement would be ready for signing.

Outgoing chief U.S. negotiator Richard Burt, testifying Wednesday before the Senate Foreign Relations Committee, urged both sides to make concessions and wrap up the treaty soon.

He said a Soviet commitment should be "locked in" because relations with Moscow could be moving into a "more ambiguous, uncertain state." He cited rising influence by Soviet generals over arms control.

Differences remain over the draft strategic arms reduction treaty's (START) ambitious provisions for monitoring compliance.

But the Bush administration also has said START cannot be

completed before the U.S.-Soviet standoff over a treaty slashing conventional forces in Europe (CFE) is ended.

Negotiators at the conventional forces talks in Vienna expressed optimism Thursday that the Soviets will make a satisfactory offer by mid-May that would allow implementation of the treaty. All NATO and Warsaw Pact countries signed the accord in Paris last November.

The White House has made resolving the dispute a prerequisite for a new summit between U.S. President George Bush and Soviet President Mikhail Gorbachev.

START was supposed to be signed at the next summit, but Bush seemed to suggest this week that he could meet Gorbachev even if the treaty is not ready.

However, Bush's spokesman, Martin Fitzwater later said that signing START remains a summit

goal, evidently to dispel any notion that the treaty is not an administration priority.

Burt told the Senate that START will cut American and Soviet long-range nuclear forces, such as intercontinental ballistic missiles (ICBMs), by an average 30-35 per cent. An early goal of a 50 per cent overall cut will not be met, he said.

He called the remaining obstacles "second-order technical problems."

Under provisions already agreed, the Soviets would have to cut the number of nuclear warheads on ICBMs by 40 per cent and halve its arsenal of especially destructive "heavy" missiles, Burt said earlier.

Open issues include how to supervise production of mobile missiles and monitor their tests, and a dispute over the encoding of data generated during missile tests.

7 killed, 8 hurt in Greece bomb blast

PATRAS, Greece (AP) — An explosion ripped through the offices of a courier firm Friday killing seven people and injuring at least eight, one seriously, police said.

Fire officials in this southwestern port city said the blast shattered the ground floor offices of Air Courier Services (ACS) killing five men and two women believed to have either been clients or employees of the company.

Police said the powerful explosion which occurred at 10:50 a.m. (0750 GMT), also damaged cars parked outside the ACS offices and that at least eight people, one seriously, were injured.

Police said at first they were uncertain who was killed and injured in the ACS offices or outside on the sidewalk, due to the confusion that ensued at the scene.

However, Simeon Voskopoulou, an ACS official in Athens, 180 kilometres from Patras, said he had an unconfirmed report that four of the dead were ACS employees who were attending to clients in the office at the time.

A Patras hospital official said that six of the dead, all Greeks, had been identified while the seventh, "was so badly mangled by the blast that we have not been able to identify the body yet."

A fire official who asked for anonymity said it was believed that a bomb in one of the packages in the ACS office was the cause of the explosion.

Later, police said that an anti-terrorist squad has left Athens to come here to investigate the explosion.

Indian army to withdraw from Assam

GUWAHATI, India (R) — Officials in Assam, where India has imposed direct rule to quell a Maoist insurgency, were puzzled Friday by reports the army had withdrawn to barracks to ease campaigning for May elections.

The reports suggested a political victory for Prime Minister Chandra Shekhar, who has been pressing a reluctant president and election chief in New Delhi for more than a week to set May polls in Punjab and Assam.

State-run television and national news agencies said Friday that Punjab and Assam, both under direct rule with security forces battling separatist insurgencies, would elect both parliamentary representatives and their own state governments during India's May 20, 23 and 26 general election.

The agency reports said army operations had been called off in Assam, an important oil and tea producing state, to ease the atmosphere for campaigning.

The duty officer at the army control room said: "I am also reading this in the newspapers, but we are not aware of being asked to report back to barracks."

State-run television said Punjab would vote on May 20 and Assam on May 23.

But sources at the office of India's governor in Assam, Lokeshwar Misra, said the country's election commission had told them not to announce polling dates yet because these were still under discussion.

"Until now, we have been told by the Election Commission that the date for both the Lok Sabha (parliament) and state assembly election will be May 23, but it could be changed to May 31 and June 3," one source said.

Vessey in Vietnam for talks on MIA, normalising ties

HANOI (R) — An unmarked U.S. military cargo plane touched down at Hanoi's Noi Bai Airport Friday with General John Vessey leading a senior delegation from Washington to discuss missing soldiers and normalising relations with Vietnam.

Vessey came officially to discuss with Hanoi officials the fate of American soldiers missing from the Vietnam War, but said he would also discuss a recently announced four-phase U.S. plan for normalising relations with Vietnam.

Hanoi was expected to take a tough stand against Washington's conditions for such normalisation, Western diplomats said.

Vietnamese officials have said privately they were pleased to be talking again with their former enemy and are ready for a constructive meeting. But a government spokeswoman said Hanoi wanted normalised ties with Washington without preconditions.

The delegation arrived in a U.S. C-135 aircraft. Middle-level Hanoi Foreign Ministry officials

gave Vessey's delegation a quiet welcome at the airport before driving them into the capital.

Vessey told reporters he had come to discuss MIAs (missing-in-action). Asked if he would also discuss the U.S. plan for normalising relations, he said: "Yes, I expect we will."

He was scheduled to meet Vietnamese Foreign Minister Nguyen Co Thach. Thach planned to host a dinner for the delegation Friday.

Western diplomats said Vietnam appeared to be taking a hard stand on a long list of conditions Washington has presented in exchange for lifting its trade embargo and normalising relations.

The plan presented last week in Washington by U.S. Assistant Secretary of State Richard Solomon to Vietnam's permanent representative to the United Nations, Trinh Xuan Lang, said Vietnam would virtually have to ensure peace in Cambodia before Washington would normalise relations with Hanoi.

One Western diplomat said Hanoi was surprised to see the

plan included conditions Washington never publicly raised before.

"The Vietnamese position seems to be very, very hard," he said. "They underlined many times they were ready to have constructive discussions with the Americans. But there were certain limits beyond which the Vietnamese could not go."

A four-page document outlining the U.S. plan says Vietnam has to persuade its allies in Phnom Penh, installed by Vietnamese invading troops in 1979, formally to cooperate on resolving cases of American soldiers missing in Cambodia.

The four-phase plan says Washington would gradually ease its trade embargo on Vietnam and begin talks on normalisation as Hanoi met the various conditions.

"I think the Americans' (demands) are too strong," the diplomat said. "They are imposing too many conditions. They raise the old MIA-POW (missing-in-action/prisoner-of-war) issue again."

Another Western diplomat said it seemed unfair to hold Vietnam responsible for an eventual agreement to the U.N. plan by Cambodia's warring factions.

linked to the former U.S.-backed South Vietnamese government who would be eligible for emigration to the United States.

It would have to help resolve cases of MIAs in Vietnam and persuade the government in Phnom Penh, installed by Vietnamese invading troops in 1979, formally to cooperate on resolving cases of American soldiers missing in Cambodia.

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"That's something no country can guarantee," he said.